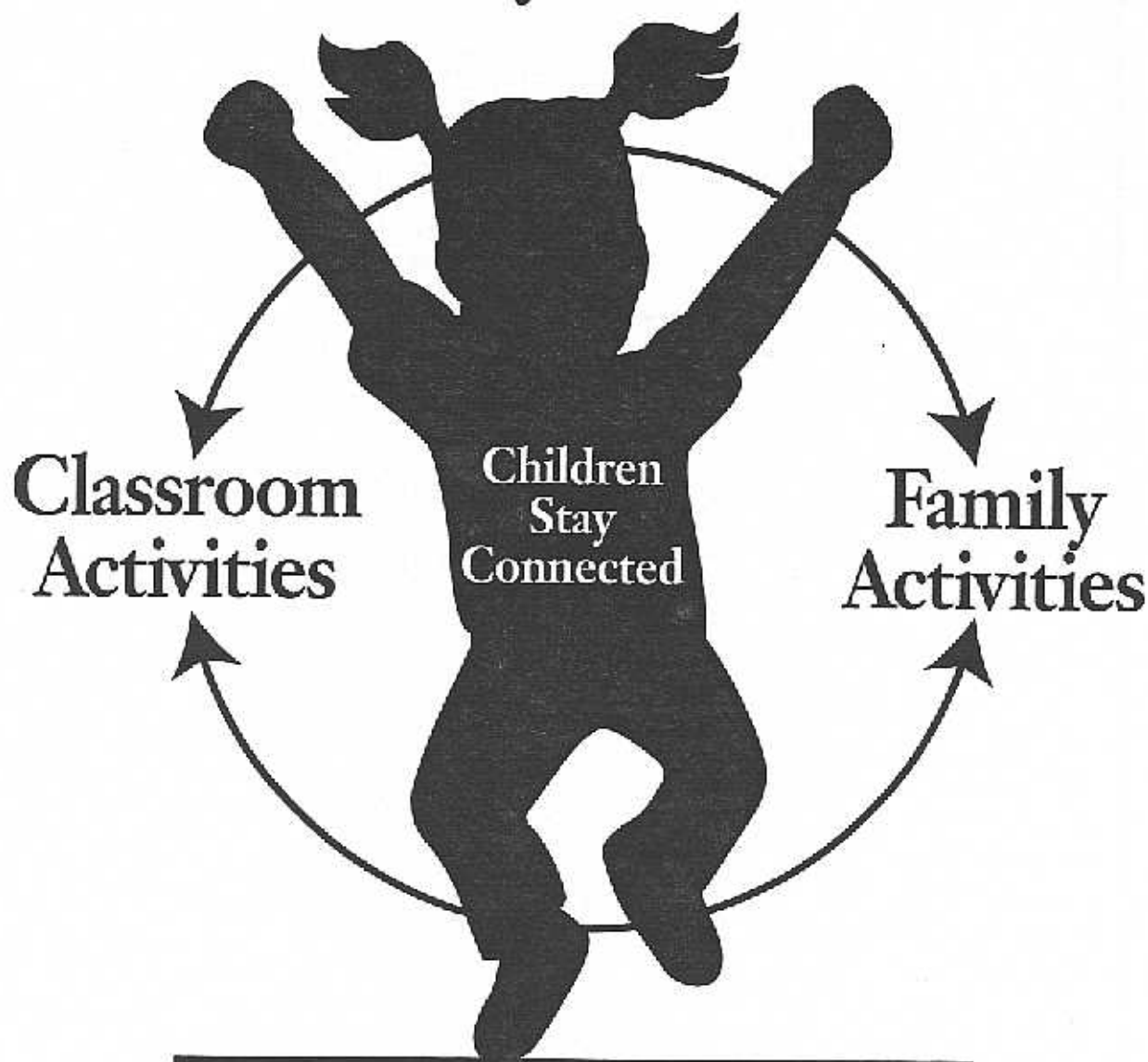


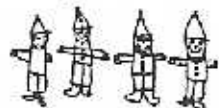
# The Family Connection



Activities that connect children to  
their classrooms and to their families

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 **ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF  
HUMAN SERVICES**

 Division of Child Care and  
Early Childhood Education

## **C**ontents of *The Family Connection Packet*

- I. Introduction to **The Family Connection** through questions and answers
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## **I**ntroduction to *The Family Connection* through questions and answers

### **W**hat is *The Family Connection*?

The *Family Connection* is a packet of materials designed to connect families of children ages three to five to the programs in which their children are enrolled.

### **W**hy was *The Family Connection* developed?

The *Family Connection* was developed to give programs serving preschool children a practical way to involve families in activities with their children at home; activities that directly connect families to what is taking place in their children's classrooms or child care settings or home visitor settings. The activities can easily be adapted for use in family child care and home visitor settings.

### **W**hat is contained in *The Family Connection* Packet?

The *Family Connection* packet contains thirty-two sets of activities. Each set of activities has a common focus and is based on benchmarks from one or more of the five developmental learning strands identified in the *Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework*.

### **W**hat is included in each set of activities?

Each set of activities has three parts. The three parts have a common focus. Each part is printed on a separate sheet as follows:

#### **Part 1: Benchmark Activity**

- Is designed to be used by the caregiver/teacher in his/her classroom or child care setting.
- Is based on benchmarks from one or more of the five developmental learning strands.
- Has the same focus as **Parts 2 and 3**.

#### **Part 2: The Classroom Connection**

- Is designed as a companion piece to *The Family Connection*
- Is to be copied and sent home with *The Family Connection*
- Is introduced with a brief "focus" paragraph that sets the stage for the information that follows.

- Gives families examples of things caregivers/teachers do in their classrooms that relate to the focus.
- Highlights the benefits children receive when families and caregivers/teachers have a shared focus for children.

### **Part 3: The Family Connection**

- Is a companion piece to *The Classroom Connection*
- Is to be copied and sent home with *The Classroom Connection*
- Gives families ideas to try with their children at home; ideas that connect to the activities that are taking place in their children's classrooms or child care settings.
- Suggests resources to use that are commonly available in most homes.

**NOTE:** Make enough copies of *The Classroom Connection* and *The Family Connection* for each family with preschool children enrolled in your program. When possible, create a two-sided handout to send home; one side with *The Classroom Connection* and the other side with *The Family Connection*. If a two-sided handout is not possible to produce, print each page separately, staple together and send home with the Family Response sheet.

### **How will programs know if families are trying *The Family Connection* ideas?**

The *Family Connection* packet contains a Family Response sheet which is to go home with each *Classroom Connection/Family Connection* handout. On the sheet, families are asked to provide feedback after participating in the activity with their children and to return the completed sheet to the program.

### **What are some strategies for getting families to participate in *The Family Connection* project?**

Begin with a plan that includes when and how to present *The Family Connection* project to families. Consider presenting the project at:

- Family Orientation
- Open House
- Time of Enrollment
- Parent Conference
- Newsletter
- Home Visit

Select the methods that best fit your program and your families.



Stress to families the benefits to be gained by participating in *The Family Connection* project. Some benefits to suggest:

- Families will learn more about what is going on in their children's classrooms or child care settings.
- Families will receive specific suggestions as to how they might best help their children at home.
- Families will have opportunities to spend quality time with their children.
- Families will have an opportunity to share their ideas about what works best for their children.
- Children will feel connected to both their families and to their classroom community.
- Children will be learning both at home and in the classroom or child care setting, thus giving them the foundation to be more successful as they enter kindergarten and the primary grades.

### **H**ow can a program get *The Family Connection* project started?

Begin with an understanding that *The Family Connection* packet is designed to be flexible. It can be adapted for use by most preschool programs, including family child care and home visitor settings. Each program can determine which sets of activities to use, adapt the materials to fit the program needs and then develop a schedule for using the materials. Here are some suggestions for getting started:

- Place the materials in a three-ring binder.
- Review the materials in the packet to become familiar with them.
- Discuss the materials with the preschool classroom staff to get their input.
- Determine how *The Family Connection* project will be presented to families. (Refer to previous question for ideas.)
- Present *The Family Connection* project to families. Ask for their commitment to participate.
- Decide on a schedule for sending home *The Classroom Connection/Family Connection* handouts.
- Use the *Index of Activities* to record the schedule for sending home the handouts. (The order of handouts can be changed.)

- Make enough copies of **The Classroom Connection/Family Connection** handout for each family.
- Make a copy of the **Family Response** sheet. Add the name of the activity and the return date, then make enough copies of this **Family Response** sheet for each family.
- Send home **The Classroom Connection/Family Connection** handout and the **Family Response** sheet.
- Follow through with the **Benchmark Activity** and **The Classroom Connection** activities before sending **The Family Connection** home to families.
- Involve children in sharing their involvement in **The Family Connection** activities at home. Be sensitive to those children whose families did not respond.
- Thank families for participating in and responding to the activities.
- Review the returned **Family Response** sheets to determine the effectiveness of the project.

**NOTE:** Suggest that families place **The Classroom Connection/Family Connection** handouts in a three-ring binder or folder for handy reference. This means using a three-hole punch for the handouts before sending them home.



## FAMILY RESPONSE





We'd like to hear from you about this Family Connection Activity.  
Please return this Family Response sheet by \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Tell us who in your family participated in this activity:

Help us evaluate the effectiveness of **The Classroom Connection / Family Connection** information and activity by rating the items listed below. Check the boxes that best express your opinion.

Family Response	Interested 	Excited 	Bored 	Frustrated 
My reaction to the information contained in <b>The Classroom Connection</b>				
My child's reaction as he/she participated in <b>The Family Connection</b> activity				
The reaction of myself and/or other family members who participated in <b>The Family Connection</b> activity with my child				
My overall rating for this <b>Family Connection</b> activity				

Give us any additional comments and suggestions. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Index of Activities

### Social / Emotional Development

	Name of Activity	Send Home Date	Return Date
<b>Activity #1</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Acting Independently		
Classroom Connection	Acting Independently		
Family Connection A	Acting Independently		
Family Connection B	I Can Do It!		
<b>Activity #2</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Reading a Story: The Kissing Hand		
Classroom Connection	Reading a Story: The Kissing Hand		
Family Connection	Reading a Story: The Kissing Hand		
<b>Activity #3</b>			
Benchmark Activity A	A Quiet Place		
Benchmark Activity B	Illustrated Daily Schedule		
Classroom Connection	Off to a Good Start		
Family Connection	Off to a Good Start		

### Creative / Aesthetic Learning

	Name of Activity	Send Home Date	Return Date
<b>Activity #4</b>			
Benchmark Activity A	Adding Art to Each Child's Portfolio		
Benchmark Activity B	Frame It		
Classroom Connection	Children's Drawings: A Picture of Development		
Family Connection	Display Your Child's Art		
<b>Activity #5</b>			
Benchmark Activity	A Collection of Collage Materials		
Classroom Connection	The Art Center		
Family Connection	The Art Box		
<b>Activity #6</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Theme Boxes		
Classroom Connection	Pretend and Make-Believe		
Family Connection	Dramatic Play Prop Boxes		
<b>Activity #7</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Singing in the Classroom		
Classroom Connection	Songs Are for Singing		
Family Connection	Songs Are for Singing Together		
Family Connection	Songs Are for Singing Together – Song Sheet		
<b>Activity #8</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Props for Music		
Classroom Connection	Moving to Music: A Natural for Children		
Family Connection	Moving to Music: A Natural for Your Child		
<b>Activity #9</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Making Sound Cans		
Classroom Connection	Making Music		
Family Connection	Making Musical Shakers		

# Index of Activities, cont.

## Cognitive / Intellectual Learning

	Name of Activity	Send Home Date	Return Date
<b>Activity #10</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Read Aloud to Children		
Classroom Connection	The Joy of Reading With Children		
Family Connection	The Joy of Reading With Your Child		
<b>Activity #11</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Connecting Families to Quality Children's Books		
Family Connection	Book Club - Letter		
<b>Activity #12</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Creating an Inviting Library/ Language Arts Area		
Classroom Connection	The Library or Reading Center		
Family Connection	Create a Reading Area for Your Child		
<b>Activity #13</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Story Dictation		
Classroom Connection	How Many Ways Do We Say "Reading and Writing are Important in Our Classroom?"		
Family Connection	A Reading and Writing Checklist for Our Family		
<b>Activity #14</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Establishing an Area for Writing		
Classroom Connection	The Write Stuff		
Family Connection	The Write Stuff		
<b>Activity #15</b>			
Benchmark Activity A	Bingo Game Boards		
Benchmark Activity B	Sorting Socks		
Classroom Connection	Seeing Likenesses and Differences		
Family Connection	Seeing Likenesses and Differences		
<b>Activity #16</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Things That Go Together		
Classroom Connection	Sorting Stuff: Things That Go Together		
Family Connection	Sorting Stuff at Home		
<b>Activity #17</b>			
Benchmark Activity	The Three Bears - From Smallest to Largest		
Classroom Connection	Putting Things in Order		
Family Connection	Growing Up		
<b>Activity #18</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Let's Play Musical Numbers		
Classroom Connection	Numbers Are Everywhere		
Family Connection	Numbers and Measuring: How Many?		
<b>Activity #19</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Taking Our Senses Outdoors		
Classroom Connection	Using Our Senses		
Family Connection	Take a Look and Listen Walk		
<b>Activity #20</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Family Trees		
Classroom Connection	Each Child's Family Is Special		
Family Connection	Our Family Is Special		



# Index of Activities, cont.

## Cognitive / Intellectual Learning, cont.

	Name of Activity	Send Home Date	Return Date
<b>Activity #21</b>			
Benchmark Activity A	Creating a Classroom Community of Helpers		
Benchmark Activity B	We Can Solve Problems		
Benchmark Activity C	Rules for Our Classroom		
Classroom Connection	Creating a Classroom Community		
Family Connection	Family Together Time		
<b>Activity #22</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Safety Checklist		
Classroom Connection	Safety First		
Family Connection	Think Family Safety		
<b>Activity #23</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Stop, Drop and Roll		
Classroom Connection	Fire Safety in Our Classroom		
Family Connection	Protect Your Family from Fatal Home Fires		
<b>Activity #24</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Collecting Recyclable Materials		
Classroom Connection	Recycled Materials: Don't Throw Away That Paper Towel Tube		
Family Connection	Please Save Recycled Materials		
<b>Activity #25</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Making Blocks from Recycled Materials		
Family Connection	Making Blocks from Recycled Materials		

## Physical Development

	Name of Activity	Send Home Date	Return Date
<b>Activity #26</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Washing Hands		
Benchmark Activity	Steps for Washing Hands (Chart)		
Classroom Connection	Taking Care of Myself		
Family Connection	Washing Hands for Health		
<b>Activity #27</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Food / Nutrition Experiences for Children		
Classroom Connection	Cooking in Our Classroom		
Family Connection	Your Child Can Be a Chef		
<b>Activity #28</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Making Playdough with Children		
Classroom Connection	Developing Muscles Needed for Writing		
Family Connection	Making Playdough		
<b>Activity #29</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Successful Scissoring With a Cutting Box		
Classroom Connection	Successful Scissoring in Our Classroom		
Family Connection	Successful Scissoring at Home		
<b>Activity #30</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Indoor Gross Motor Activities: File and Prop Boxes		
Classroom Connection	On the Move		
Family Connection	On the Move at Home		



# Index of Activities, cont.

## Language

	Name of Activity	Send Home Date	Return Date
<b>Activity #31</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Collection of Language / Discussion Pictures		
Classroom Connection	Expanding Language		
Family Connection	Naming Things		
<b>Activity #32</b>			
Benchmark Activity	Collection / File of Language Materials		
Classroom Connection	Fingerplays: A Fun Way to Learn		
Family Connection	Fingerplays: A Fun Way to Learn at Home		

## Activity #1

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### "Acting Independently"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Social / Emotional Development (Acting Independently)

**Benchmark(s):**

- 1.1 Demonstrates ability to make choices
- 1.2 Demonstrates independence in personal care
- 1.3 Demonstrates ability to play independently

**Setting (when & where):** Classroom

**Number of Children:** All

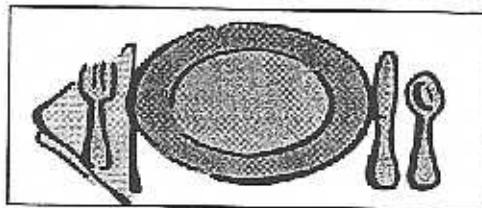
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**Materials:** Assorted materials for helping children acquire and practice skills.

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**Steps:**

1. Develop a list of health and personal care skills for children in your group to acquire and practice.
2. Include skills related to eating, getting dressed, washing hands, toileting and brushing teeth, for example.
3. Develop strategies for helping children acquire and practice the skills. Here are some suggestions.
  - a. Washing Hands: See **Benchmark Activity #26**
  - b. Dressing: Place dress-up clothes with buttons, snaps and zippers in the dramatic play/home living area.
  - c. Folding covers: In small groups, demonstrate to children the proper way to fold covers. Allow children to practice. Place doll blankets in the home living area.
  - d. Setting Table: In dramatic play area and/or at dining table, provide placemats with outlines showing where dishes and utensils are to be placed when setting the table. Allow children a turn setting the table at snack and lunch.



- e. Observe the children at work and play and document their skills on the **Developmental Rating Scale**.
- f. Complete **Family Connection Activity #1B "I Can Do It"** for each child. Send home to families. Include a **Family Response** sheet.
- g. Share with families information you have documented on the **Developmental Rating Scale** section on "Acting Independently."

**NOTE:** Refer to the **Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework: Benchmarks with Strategies/Activities for Three and Four Year Old Children**, Developmental Learning Strand 1: Social/Emotional, and the **Developmental Rating Scale** for additional ideas.

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #1

#### "Acting Independently"

Parents who spend time in our classroom often express amazement at a couple of things they observe. First, they notice that children do so many things for themselves. For example, a parent will say, "I didn't know my child could put on his own shoes." Second, they notice that children usually choose where to play and stay involved in the activities they select. We say the children are "acting independently."

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**Here are some things we do to help children act independently; to make choices and do things for themselves.**

- ☐ We set up our classroom in learning centers with interesting toys and materials so children have good choices.
- ☐ We have low, open shelves so that children can select and put away materials.
- ☐ We help children learn to do things for themselves when eating, getting dressed, washing hands and toileting, for example.
- ☐ We help children learn to fold and put away covers after rest time.
- ☐ We make sure that each child in the group is successful in doing some things independently.

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**This is what happens when children are allowed to make choices and to do things for themselves both at home and in the classroom.**

- Children are developing an "I can do it" attitude, which can be helpful when they move into kindergarten and the primary grades.
- Children feel successful and proud of their accomplishments.
- Children are learning to make good choices, which is a lifelong challenge.
- Children are taking responsibility for their own learning.

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #1A

#### "Acting Independently"

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**You will need:** boxes, baskets, plastic tubs, low open shelves

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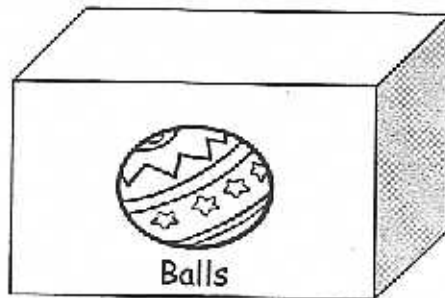
#### Try this!

- Have storage containers for your child's toys; for example shoe and boot boxes, small baskets, plastic tubs and low, open shelves.

**Note:** Do not use large toy boxes which can be a safety hazard for children.

- Put words and picture labels on the containers so your child will know where toys belong.

Example:



- Show your child how to do things for himself/herself; for example, how to wash hands and hang up clothes.
- Place clothes hooks and racks at a height your child can reach without help.
- Let your child help do things such as make beds and fold clothes.
- Be patient! Remember that your child is just beginning to learn to be independent.

#### **Additional suggestions:**

Try this if your child seems to have too many toys:

- Help your child decide which toys to keep out for playing with now and which toys to put away.
- Help your child pack the other toys in a box.
- Write the contents on the outside of the box and put the box away.
- Rotate your child's toys to keep his or her interest.

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #1B

### "I Can Do It"

Dear Families,

In our classroom, children can do many things for themselves. We say the children are "acting independently." We thought you might like to know some of the things your child does in our classroom, either with help or independently.

_____ can:	With help	Independently	No opportunity to observe
-----wash hands			
-----use the toilet			
-----zip and unzip			
-----snap			
-----button			
-----put on coat			
-----tie shoe laces			
-----help set table for snack and meals			
-----rest quietly on cot/mat			
-----fold covers after rest time			
-----use tissue to blow nose			
-----help put away toys			
-----other (list) _____			

Join us in helping your child "act independently." It sometimes takes a little more time for children to be independent and it takes a lot of patience. It's worth it. The children are so proud when they can say "I did it all by myself!"

We'd like to hear from you. What are some things your child does at home that we do not know about? Use the Family Response sheet to let us know.

Sincerely,

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
signature

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #2

#### "Reading a Story: *The Kissing Hand*"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Social / Emotional Development (Interact Socially)

**Benchmark(s):** 1.10 Demonstrates trust in adults  
1.11 Shows ability to separate from parents

**Setting (when & where):** Group Time  
(At the beginning of the school year or when a new child enrolls)

**Number of Children:** All

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**Materials:** Book: *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn, Child Welfare League of America (1993), card stock, crayons, heart shaped stickers

#### Steps:

##### Before reading:

1. Read the book ahead of time to familiarize yourself with the characters and the story line.
2. Make sure all children are sitting comfortably where they can view the illustrations easily.
3. Discuss the illustration on the cover of the book and let children predict what the story might be about.
4. Read aloud the title and the author and illustrator's names.

##### During reading:

1. Hold the book to your side so children can see the illustrations as you read the story.
2. Read the story aloud to the children with expression.
3. Pause during the story and ask if their predictions are correct or if they would like to change their prediction.
4. Pause at the conclusion, allowing the children to digest the story and give their honest feedback.

##### After reading:

1. Talk about the story and the illustrations.
2. Decide if the predictions were correct.

**Note:** When reading the story, be very sensitive to each child's family situation and adjust your story if necessary.

##### Ideas for Extending the Activity:

- Share the book with families by putting the following items in a bookbag or shoebox:
  - Book: *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn
  - **The Classroom Connection/Family Connection**
  - Hand outline
  - Heart Shaped Stickers
  - Crayons
  - Send the bag home with each child for 2-3 days for his/her family to share together.
- Read the book, *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn with children and families at family orientation.
- Read additional books such as, *Will I Have a Friend?* By Miriam Cohen, MacMillan (1986).



## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #2

#### "Reading a Story: *The Kissing Hand*"

Remember your first days at preschool or kindergarten. Did you feel lonely or afraid when your family left? We understand these feelings in the children in our classroom; so we plan activities to help children make the transition from home to a new setting.

Here are some things we do to make it easier for children to separate from their families.

- ☐ We read the book, *"The Kissing Hand"* by Audrey Penn, as new children enter our classroom.

This is a story about Chester Raccoon. Chester is going to school for the first time and is afraid. His mother shares a family secret with him to help him feel less afraid. She places a kiss in the palm of his hand. She tells him when he is lonely, he is to press his hand to his face and remember that she loves him. Just before Chester goes to school, he gives his mother a "kissing hand" so she can know he loves her too.

- ☐ We read and discuss the book several times.
- ☐ We invite children to talk about some of their feelings during their first days at school.
- ☐ We trace an outline of each child's hand and help the child cut it out.
- ☐ We send the "kissing hand" activity home with each child to share with his/her family.

See **The Family Connection Activity #2** to get ideas for making your child's "kissing hand" special.

**This is what happens when children can easily separate from their families.**

- Children enjoy their classroom experiences.
- Children are better able to concentrate on classroom activities.
- Children help their families feel good about leaving their children with us.

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #2

#### "Reading a Story: *The Kissing Hand*"

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#### You will need:

Crayons

An outline of your child's hand that has been sent home by your child's teacher or that you have traced on paper or poster board

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#### Try This!

- Invite your child to recall the events in the book, *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn. Use his/her hand outline as a reminder.
- Help your child decide how to make his/her "kissing hand" special. Here are some suggestions:
  - Give the hand a simple kiss. That's what Chester Raccoon and his mother did. (Lipstick makes the kiss show!)
  - Add a heart drawing or heart sticker.
  - Glue a family photo to the hand.
  - Write the words "I love you" on the hand.
  - Have each family member "autograph" the hand.
- Encourage your child to take his/her special "kissing hand" back to school for sharing or for comfort.



## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #3A

#### "A Quiet Place"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Social / Emotional Development (Interact Socially)

**Benchmark(s):** 1.10 Demonstrates trust in adults  
1.11 Shows ability to separate from parents  
1.12 Demonstrates interest and participates in classroom activities

**Setting (when & where):** Area of the classroom

**Number of Children:** One at a time

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**Materials:** Pillows, rug, soft doll or stuffed animal

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**Steps:**

1. Select an area of the classroom that is suitable as a "Quiet Place" area for one child at a time.
2. Locate the area away from the hustle and bustle of the classroom, yet an area that can be observed by the adults.
3. Create a feeling of protection and softness in the area. For example, use pillows or a fluffy rug.
4. Discuss with the children that this is a "Quiet Place" where a child can go to be alone.
5. Invite the children to talk about times they may want to visit the "Quiet Place".  
**Note:** This area is NOT for Time Out. The child chooses to go there.

**Ideas for Extending the Activity:**

- Create a "Quiet Place" from an appliance box.
  - Cut out a door and windows.
  - Invite children to help paint/decorate the box.
  - Add pillows and/or rug.
  - Add a soft, cuddly doll or stuffed animal
  - Add a small basket of books
  - Add a few items such as lacing cards or lacing beads
- Show families the "Quiet Place". Explain to them that sometimes children need to be alone for a few minutes, especially when they first come into the classroom. Also, sometimes a child simply needs to get away from the hustle and bustle of group living.

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #3B

### "Illustrated Daily Schedule"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Social / Emotional Development (Interact Socially)

**Benchmark(s):** 1.10 Demonstrates trust in adults  
1.13 Participates in routines easily

**Setting (when & where):** Classroom

**Number of Children:** All

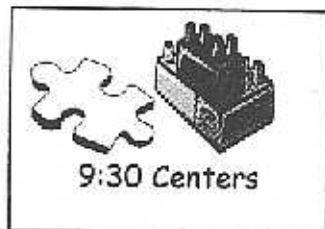
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**Materials:** Poster board, drawings, pictures or photos of daily activities

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**Steps:**

1. Agree on a daily schedule with co-workers.
2. Create an illustrated time line of the daily schedule on poster board.
3. Illustrate each major time period with drawings, pictures or photos.
4. Include word labels and times.
5. Post the schedule where children can see it.
6. Review the schedule with children, guiding them to "picture read" it.
7. Consider having two rows of illustrations, one for morning and one for afternoon.



**Ideas for Extending the Activity:**

- Remind children when the schedule is changed for a special event, for example.
- Replicate the schedule on an 8 1/4 by 11" sheet of paper.
- Make enough copies of the schedule for each family.
- Send home a copy of the schedule to each family with a note explaining it.

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #3

#### "Off To A Good Start"

Children sometimes feel lonely, lost or afraid when they first come to our classroom. Some children have trouble separating from their families. We understand these feelings. We do everything we can to make your child's beginning here as happy as possible.

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Here are some ways we help children adjust to our classroom.

- ☐ We quickly learn each child's name and use it often. A child's name is important to him/her.
- ☐ We talk with each child about his/her family. This helps the child stay connected to family.
- ☐ We are in the classroom at the same time each day. Children know they can depend on us to take care of them.
- ☐ We have a special place for each child to store his/her possessions. The cubbies are labeled with each child's name.
- ☐ We have a special area in the classroom where a child can go to be alone for a few minutes.
- ☐ We provide a dependable schedule so children know what to expect each day.

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This is what happens when children are helped to make a good adjustment to our classroom

- Children feel that they belong to both their family and to the classroom community.
- Children know we will take care of them while they are in our classroom.
- Children are eager to participate in the learning activities we plan.
- Children enjoy being with the other children.

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #3

#### "Off To A Good Start"

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#### Suggested Books:

*Clifford's First School Day* by Norman Bridwell, Scholastic (1999)  
*Franklin Goes to School* by Paulette Bourgeois, Scholastic (1995)  
*Froggie Goes to School* by Jonathan London, Viking Children's Books (1996)  
*Off to School, Little Duck* by Amy Hest, Scholastic (1999)  
*Timothy Goes to School* by Rosemary Wells, Viking (Reissue edition 2000)  
*Wimberly Worried* by Kevin Henkes, Greenwillow (2000)

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#### Try This!

- If possible, visit the program with your child before the child's first day.
- Read with your child a book with a starting-school theme. We have listed some books to consider.
- Encourage your child to talk about his/her feelings or what to expect in the classroom.
- Spend a few minutes at arrival helping your child get involved in something fun, if this is encouraged by your child's teacher.
- Say "Goodbye" to your child, then leave. Avoid slipping out when your child isn't looking.
- Let your child know when you plan to return. Try to relate it to an event in the daily schedule, such as "after afternoon snack" rather than "clock" time.
- Give your child a family photo to keep in his/her cubbie or display on the classroom wall.





## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #4A

### "Adding Art to Each Child's Portfolio"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Creative / Aesthetic Learning

**Benchmark(s):** 2.10 Explores and manipulates art media  
2.11 Creates drawings and paintings that gradually become more detailed and realistic

**Setting (when & where):** Ongoing

**Number of Children:** All

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**Materials:** Samples of each child's drawings  
Each child's portfolio

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**Steps:**

1. Collect samples of each child's drawings to add to his/her portfolio. Collect a sample every month or two.
2. Date the drawings. (You might also list the age of the child in years and months).
3. Write on a strip of paper and attach to the drawing the two Benchmarks listed above.
4. Place the labeled drawings in each child's portfolio.
5. Review the drawings in chronological order in the middle and at the end of the school/program year.
6. Write a one or two sentence summary of each child's progress based on the stages of drawing and your review of the child's drawings.

**Ideas for Extending the Activity:**

- Share the collection of each child's drawings with the family during parent conferences.
- Use the "Stages of Drawing" in **Classroom Connection Activity #4**, to help families see their child's development.
- Discuss with parents the benchmarks that the drawings show the child is achieving.

**Note:** Refer to **Supplement 3, Portfolios**, for information on how to organize and maintain portfolios.



## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #4B

#### "Frame It"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Creative / Aesthetic Learning

**Benchmark(s):** 2.10 Explores and manipulates art media  
2.11 Creates drawings and paintings that gradually become more detailed and realistic

**Setting (when & where):** Ongoing

**Number of Children:** All

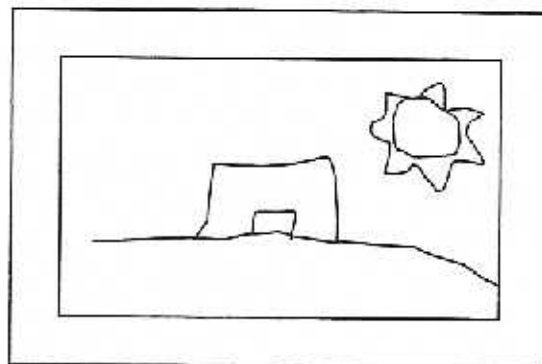
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**Materials:** Samples of each child's drawings, wallpaper sample books, folders, mailing envelopes, tape

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#### Steps:

1. Matting Pictures
  - a. Glue pictures on wallpaper cut into squares, rectangles or circles, leaving a 2-3" border of wallpaper for a frame.
2. Framing Pictures with Folder or Mailing Envelope
  - a. Cut a picture size square out of one side of a folder or mailing envelope, leaving a border or frame.
  - b. Tape the two sides of the folder and leave the top open.
  - c. Place a child's drawing in the folder or inside the mailing envelope so the drawing can be seen inside the frame of the folder or envelope.
  - d. This "frame" can be used for display of a child's drawing and new drawings can be placed in the frames periodically.
3. Framing Pictures with Wallpaper
  - a. Cut a picture size frame out of wallpaper.
  - b. Back the frame with cardboard, card stock, or half of a folder.
  - c. Tape the edges leaving the top open.
  - d. Slide child's drawing in the frame making sure the drawing is visible through the "frame."



## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #4

#### "Children's Drawings: A Picture of Development"

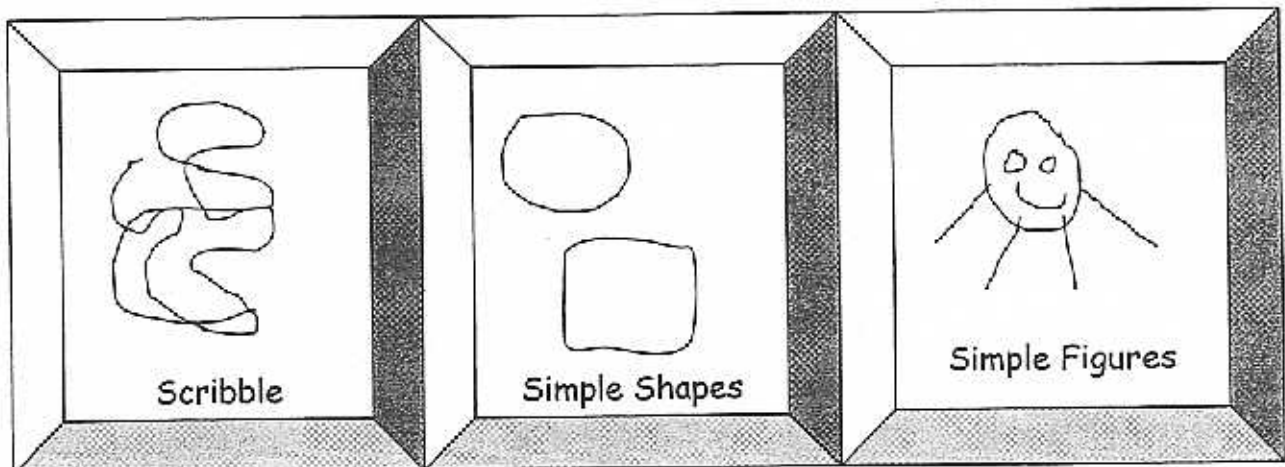
Visit our classroom. Look at the children's drawings on display. You will probably see the stages that children go through in their drawings. Most children progress through the same stages as they draw with pencils, crayons and markers. They go from making dots to lines to scribbles and then to producing drawings with details. The drawings below illustrate the stages that most children go through as they draw.

Here are some ways we document these stages of development in children's drawings.

- ☐ We give children daily opportunities to draw with pencils, markers and crayons.
- ☐ We collect samples of each child's drawings throughout the year. We put the date on each drawing.
- ☐ We keep the drawings in each child's portfolio.

This is what happens when we collect samples of each child's drawings.

- We look at the drawings to see the progress that children are making.
- We share the drawings with each child's family as one way to show the child's development.



## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #4

#### "Display Your Child's Art"

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**You will need:** Your child's art

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#### Try This!

- Select a place to display your child's art: on the refrigerator, on a bulletin board or in the hallway, for example.
- Display the art at your child's height, if possible, so he/she can see it.
- Display your child's art in the selected area.
- Involve your child in selecting the art pieces to display.

#### Additional Ideas

If you wish to save your child's art

- Use a large envelope, a file folder, or make a large envelope (see instructions below).
- With your child, choose pieces of art to save and write the date on the back of the art. Remember, you cannot save everything.
- Look at the drawings you have collected over several months. Put them in order by dates from the first to the last one.
- Note the progress your child has made in his/her drawings.

**NOTE:** Give your child daily opportunities to draw with pencils, markers and crayons on unlined paper.



#### Make an "art envelope":

1. Fold a poster board in half.
2. Tape the sides together, leaving the top open.
3. Let your child decorate the envelope with crayons or washable markers.
4. Slide your child's drawings in the top

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #5

### “A Collection of Collage Materials”

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Creative / Aesthetic Learning

**Benchmark(s):** 2.10 Explores and manipulates art media  
2.12 Preplans art project and then works with care

**Setting (when & where):** Art Center

**Number of Children:** Small group, 4-6 children

**Materials:** Collage Materials (see suggested list)  
Glue in small containers with cotton swab or craft stick, blunt-tip scissors  
Cardboard, heavy corrugated paper, heavy construction paper (to use for base)  
Resource Books: Dodge, D.T., Colker, L., and Heroman, C. *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Fourth Edition*  
Bos, Bev. *Don't Move the Muffin Tins*  
Warren, Jean. *1,2,3 Art*

#### Steps:

1. Collect collage materials. Use the list below as a guide and be creative.
2. Store collage materials in separate containers; containers that will fit on the art shelf.  
Example: lace in one container, ribbons in another
3. Label each container with words and pictures or a sample of the collage materials.  
Example: “Ribbon” – glue a small strip of ribbon to the outside of the container.
4. Rotate collage materials on the art shelf
  - a. For variety
  - b. In support of seasons (brown, orange and gold for Fall, for example)
  - c. To reinforce themes and/or concepts children are studying
5. Introduce collage materials to children and provide guidance as to how materials are to be used. **DO NOT MAKE A MODEL!**
  - a. Select collage items to have available
  - b. Provide containers such as a paper plate for each child who will be making a collage
  - c. Suggest that children pre-select materials they want to use and put those materials in their individual container
  - d. Give each child a small container of glue
  - e. Guide children to select a base for their collage
  - f. Children then use glue to secure items to the base
  - g. Allow children to get additional materials if needed and use scissors to reshape materials they have selected

#### Collage Materials:

Natural Items	Sewing Items	Fabric Scraps	Paper
Acorns	Braid	Burlap	Wrapping paper
Dried flowers	Buttons	Corduroy	Wallpaper samples
Twigs	Rickrack	Denim	Tissue paper
Feathers	Ribbon	Felt	Foil
Seeds	Yarn	Fur (fake)	Paper cut in shapes
	Sequins	Lace	Construction paper (scraps)
		Leather	Greeting cards
		Oil cloth	Cutout magazine pictures of all kinds
			Stickers

**Note:** When selecting collage materials for the children make safety your first consideration!

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #5

#### "The Art Center"

The art center is a favorite area for children in our classroom. In the art center, children enjoy using the materials available to them. They draw with crayons and markers. They paint with brushes and with their fingers. They cut and paste. They roll and pound playdough.

Here are some ways we encourage children to spend time in the art center

- ☐ We provide a variety of materials such as:

Crayons	Water-based markers	Glue and paste
Paper	Paint	Paint brushes
Blunt-tip scissors	Fabric scraps	Ribbon
Lace	Wallpaper samples	Playdough
Small rolling pins	Cookie cutters	Hole Punch

- ☐ We let children select art materials and use them in their own way.
- ☐ We never use coloring books or color sheets with the children. Coloring books and color sheets get in the way of children's ability to create on their own.
- ☐ We never make an example of an art project that we expect children to copy. We want them to think and plan for themselves, rather than try to do what an adult has done.

**This is what happens when children have the freedom to draw, paint, cut and paste on their own:**

- Children develop thinking skills as they plan what to do.
- Children learn to make shapes and designs.
- Children develop small muscles necessary for writing.



## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #5

#### "The Art Box"

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**You will need:** storage box  
paper and cardboard  
lace scraps

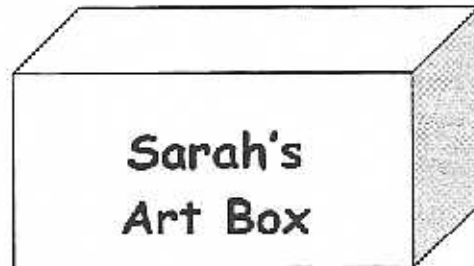
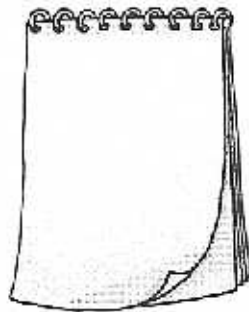
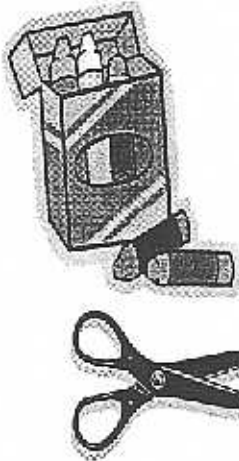
fat crayons  
washable glue  
ribbon

washable markers  
blunt-tip scissors  
fabric scraps

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#### Try This!

- Help your child select a sturdy box for storing art materials.
- Assist your child in collecting the art materials to be placed in the box.
- Let your child know where the art materials can be used. For example, the kitchen table.  
**TIP:** Select an "easy to clean" space because some art can be messy.
- Designate a special place for your child to put the art box when not in use.
- Discuss with your child the safe way to use scissors. For example:
  - Stay seated when using the scissors.
  - Cut only items in the art box.
- Encourage your child to use the art materials independently and at anytime.
- Find a place to display your child's art.



## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #6

### "Theme Boxes"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Creative / Aesthetic Learning

**Benchmark(s):**

- 2.1 Shows creativity and imagination in play with materials and props
- 2.2 Participates in dramatic play themes that become more involved and complex
- 2.3 Assumes various roles in dramatic play situations

**Setting (when & where):** Home Living / Dramatic Play Center

**Number of Children:** Small group, 3-5 children

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**Materials:** Storage boxes, assorted props relating to theme

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**Steps:**

1. Decide on a certain number of theme boxes to develop over a period of time, one per month, for example.
2. Select storage boxes, one per theme. Boxes should be large enough to hold the collected items and fit into your allotted storage space.
3. Clearly label the boxes with words and pictures.
4. Begin to collect props and materials for the theme boxes. Possible sources: classroom materials that are not used daily, thrift shop, yard sales and flea markets, family contributions. NOTE: wash and sanitize collected items.
5. Tape a list of items (inventory) to the inside cover of the box.
6. Add additional items and discard items that become broken or ragged and torn.

### Suggested themes

**Work-place themes:** grocery store, laundromat, restaurant, shoe store, garage/auto repair shop, office, barbershop/hairdresser

**Career-related themes:** mechanic, medical worker, firefighter, baker, construction worker, florist, farmer

**Adventure-related themes:** camping trip, day at the beach, picnic, vacation trip, visit to county fair.

### Ideas for Extending the Activity:

- Add theme boxes to the dramatic play area as a new theme is being introduced and studied.
- Add a theme box when the children express an interest in a topic.
- Add a theme box when a special event takes place in the community.

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #6

#### "Pretend and Make-Believe"

In our classroom, children use their imagination. They make-believe. They pretend to go shopping. They pretend to feed the baby (their doll). They pretend to put out fires. We call this dramatic play.

Here are some ways we encourage children to pretend and make believe.

- ☐ We set up an area of the room for home-living or dramatic play. Children play in the area each day.

- ☐ We place child-size furniture in the area to represent a kitchen and living area.

- ☐ We add props such as:

pots and pans	empty food containers	dolls and doll clothes
unbreakable dishes	telephones	cleaning sponges

- ☐ We add dress-up clothes, both male and female.

- ☐ We allow children to play in the area each day.

- ☐ We develop theme or prop boxes. For example, we might develop a box for the following themes:

supermarket	barbershop/hairdresser	office
garage/repair shop	laundromat	construction

- ☐ We add a theme box to the home living area and let it stay there as long as children are interested in it.

This is what happens when children pretend and make believe.

- Children learn to think and solve problems.
- Children expand their language.
- Children concentrate for longer periods of time.
- Children learn to cooperate with others.
- Children learn about themselves, their families and their community (Social Studies).

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #6

#### "Dramatic Play Prop Box"

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**You will need:** Box or basket, assorted props for play

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#### Try This!

- Select a play theme in which your child is interested. (See list below)
- Locate a box or basket for storing dress-up clothes and items related to the theme.
- Involve your child in collecting props and materials for the box.
- Shop yard sales and flea markets for theme box items.
- Develop additional theme boxes as your child's interest changes.

**TIP:** Theme boxes are wonderful to have for your child's birthday party or when your child has friends over to play.



#### Examples of Theme Boxes

##### **Barbershop/Hairdresser:**

empty shampoo bottles with labels, combs and brushes, old towels, small plastic pan, hand mirror, smock made from old shirt, hand-held dryer without electric cord

**Camping:** canteens, cooking utensils, flashlight, empty food containers, old sheet for tent

**Beach:** beach bag and beach towels, old swimsuits, flip-flops, empty suntan lotion containers, old sunglasses (plastic)

**Kitchen:** apron, bibs, small cooking utensils, cups and plates (unbreakable), whisk broom, and dust pan

**Other Themes:** Medical Worker, Firefighter, Garage/Auto Repair Shop, Office

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #7

### "Singing in the Classroom"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Creative / Aesthetic Learning

**Benchmark(s):** 2.4 Participates freely in music activities  
2.5 Enjoys singing games, dramatizing songs and moving to music

**Setting (when & where):** Group Time and Learning Center Time

**Number of Children:** Large and small group, individual children

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**Materials:** words to songs, cassette tapes or CDs and players

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**Steps:**

1. Include singing activities daily.
2. Introduce a song by either singing it or by playing it on tape or CD. Children are not concerned with the quality of your singing voice. They will enjoy singing along with you.
3. Start with easy songs that invite participation; songs that have a number of repetitive words and movements.  
Example: "Eency Weency Spider" and "Wheels on the Bus"
4. Sing or play the song a second time.
5. Encourage the children to join in the singing as they do the movements.
6. Repeat the song for several days.
7. Introduce new songs, following steps #1-6.

**Note:** Avoid asking children if they want to learn a new song. Their answer will usually be "no."

### Ideas for extending the activity

#### Song Charts

**Materials:** Poster board or chart paper, markers, drawings, rubber stamps, stickers, or clip art that illustrates the song.

1. Print the title and words to a song on poster board (22" by 24") or create words on computer.  
Make print large enough for all children in the group to see.
2. Add illustrations, using drawings, pictures, clip art, stickers or rubber stamps.
3. Laminate or cover with clear contact paper for durability.
4. Show a song chart to children and invite them to tell you the name of the song. Then sing the song together.

#### Music Book of Song Charts

1. Make a cover for the music book. Give the book a title and use musical notes to illustrate.
2. Punch holes in the cover and the song charts.
3. Hook together with metal book rings.
4. Use in group time or place in music center or home living/dramatic play center, for example.

**Note:** This "song book" may also be made in 8 1/2" by 11" format for individual children to use during center time.

## **Benchmark Activity #7 cont. "Singing in the Classroom"**

### **List of Songs**

1. Select a long strip of paper for a song list.
2. Add titles of songs to the song list as you and the children learn new songs.
3. Add pictures or illustrations next to the titles. For example, add a spider by "Eency Weency Spider."
4. Allow children to select songs from the list to sing during group time.
5. Post the list in the music center.

### **Books About Music**

Select books about music to read to the children and to include in the library area.

#### **Suggested Titles:**

*This Old Man* by Pam Adams, Child's Play Intl Ltd (1989)

*There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly* by Simms Taback, Viking Children's Books (1997)

*The Wheels on the Bus* by Maryanne Kovalski, Scott Foresman (Reprint 1990)

*What a Wonderful World* by George D. Weiss and Bob Thiele, illustrated by Ashley Bryan, Antheneum (1995)



## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #7

#### "Songs are for Singing"

Children love to sing. They sing with their families. They sing with their teacher and with other children. They sing with the radio, a tape or CD. They sing alone. Children and singing are a natural.

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Here are some ways we make singing a vital part of the daily curriculum.

- ☐ We sing throughout the day, not just at "music time."
  - ☐ We sing along with the children. We know they enjoy singing with us, whatever the quality of our voice.
  - ☐ We sing songs that go with our themes. For example, we sing "Old McDonald Had a Farm" when we study farm animals.
  - ☐ We sing songs about colors, shapes, sizes and numbers.
  - ☐ We sing songs using each child's name. Children like to hear their names in songs.
- 

This is what happens when children sing each day

- Children remember what they learn through singing.
- Children learn new words.
- Children are creative as they make up new words to familiar songs.
- Children learn about math and science through songs.

**Activity #7**

**THE FAMILY CONNECTION**

**"Songs Are For Singing Together"**

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**You will need:** you and your child, favorite songs

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**Try This!**

- Invite your child to join you in singing one of the songs listed here. We have included songs that are favorites of the children.
- Encourage your child to show you the motions (if there are any) that go with the song.
- Encourage your child to sing other songs he/she knows.
- Ask us for the tune if you aren't familiar with a song your child says he/she learned at school.
- Ask us for additional songs if you and your child enjoy singing together.

**Songs To Sing: (See the attached Song Sheet)**

- The Wheels on the Bus
- Old McDonald Had a Farm
- This Is the Way We Wash Our Hands
- Where is Thumbkin?

Use the **Family Response** sheet to give us the names of songs you remember from your childhood. We may ask you for the tune or for you to come into our classroom and sing the song with us.



The Family Connection Activity #7cont.

**"Songs Are For Singing Together- Song Sheet"**

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**The Wheels on the Bus**

(Verses can be added, deleted or sung in any order)

The wheels on the bus go round and round,  
Round and round, round and round.  
The wheels on the bus go round and round,  
All through the town.

(Roll hands over each other)

The wipers on the bus go "swish, swish, swish,  
Swish, swish, swish, swish, swish, swish"  
The wipers on the bus go "swish, swish, swish"  
All through the town.

(Put arms together in from of you and "swish" like  
windshield wipers)

Additional verses:

The door on the bus goes open and shut  
(Cover eyes with hands on "shut" and uncover them on "open")

The horn on the bus goes "beep, beep, beep"  
(Pretend to honk horn)

The baby on the bus goes "wah, wah, wah"  
(Pretend to wipe eyes like a baby who is crying)

The money on the bus goes clink, clink, clink  
(Pretend to drop coins in money box)

**Old MacDonald Had a Farm**

Old MacDonald had a farm, e-i-e-i-o  
And on this farm he had a cow, e-i-e-i-o  
With a moo, moo here, and a moo, moo there,  
Here a moo, there a moo, everywhere a moo, moo,  
Old MacDonald had a farm, e-i-e-i-o

Additional verses: Duck (quack, quack)  
Sheep (baa, baa)  
Chick (peep, peep)

Pig (oink, oink)  
Dog (woof, woof)  
Truck (rattle, rattle)

Horse (neigh, neigh)  
Cat (meow, meow)

**This Is the Way We Wash Our Hands**

(Tune: "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush")

This is the way we wash our hands, wash our hands, wash our hands,  
This is the way we wash our hands, so early in the morning.

Additional verses: brush our teeth wash our face put on our clothes  
make up our bed eat our breakfast go to school

**Where is Thumbkin?**

(Tune: "Are You Sleeping?" Motions: Finger on one hand pretends to talk to the other hand)

Where is thumbkin, where is thumbkin? Here I am, Here I am.  
How are you today, sir? Very well I thank you, Run away, run away.

Additional verses: pointer, tall man, ring man, pinkie

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #8

### "Props for Music"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Creative / Aesthetic Learning

- Benchmark(s):**
- 2.4 Participates freely in music activities
  - 2.5 Enjoys singing games, dramatizing songs and moving to music
  - 2.6 Expresses through movement what is felt and heard in various tempos and styles
  - 2.7 Experiments with a variety of musical instruments and sound sources.
  - 2.8 Identifies the source of a variety of sounds
  - 2.9 Moves in time to the beat

**Setting (when & where):** Group Time and Learning Center Time

**Number of Children:** Large and small group, individual children

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**Materials:** recycled materials for making props, purchased materials

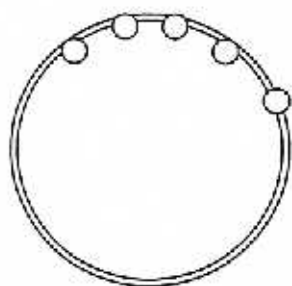
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**Collect and make props that can be used for music:**

1. Collect scarves, streamers or ribbons that children can wave as they move to music. Sources: garage sales, dollar stores, donations from families. Have at least one movement prop per child when using props for group activities. Provide two to four props for children to use as they play in learning centers. Children will develop large, sweeping movements to keep scarves, streamers or ribbons floating.
2. Decorate oatmeal boxes and coffee cans to create drums. Children can help with the decorations. Children use their hands to play the drums. Different sizes and types of cans will create different sounds.
3. Make rhythm sticks from 12" dowel sticks that are at least 3/4" in diameter. Have enough so each child has a set of rhythm sticks. Be sure to sand ends smooth. You can decorate sticks with colorful plastic tape or with paint.
4. Make musical shakers from recycled materials
  - a. Bottle Shakers – fill empty dry water bottles, clear plastic shampoo or detergent bottles with small beads, colored aquarium gravel or small jingle bells. Glue the lid on for safety.
  - b. Seed Shakers - place seeds inside empty plastic, metal or cardboard containers (coffee can, plastic bottle or oatmeal box). Use a variety of seeds (some small and some large, like acorns). Tightly seal the top with tape.
  - c. Gourd Shakers – Look for gourds that have been dried. They will have their own seeds. Let children paint or decorate the gourds.
  - d. Film Canister Shakers – Place aquarium gravel or seeds inside the film canister. Glue the lid on tightly.
5. Purchase or make beanbags to use as a prop during movement activities.

### Benchmark Activity #8 cont. "Props for Music"

6. Collect aluminum pie pans for cymbals.
7. Make pom-poms and streamers:
  - a. Pom-poms – Roll half sheets of newspaper into stick shapes. Tape the bottom half to form a handle. Cut the top half into strips.
  - b. Streamers – Collect plastic bracelets, rings or macramé rings. Add ribbon (use 1 yard length for a double streamer) that you tie around the ring.
8. Make a microphone from a tissue roll and a ball of aluminum foil. Cover all with aluminum foil.
9. Paint a wooden dowel rod to make a baton or wand.
10. Purchase hula-hoops at dollar stores to use as movement props.
11. Make bell bracelets with bells strung on ribbon or chenille stems. Make bell gloves by sewing bells to each finger of the glove.



## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #8

#### "Moving to Music: A Natural for Children"

Movement is the natural partner of music. Watch as an infant listens to a song. The infant may sway from side to side. Moving to music begins with infants and increases with toddlers. Moving to music continues with preschool children and into adulthood. Moving to music is enjoyed by people of all ages.

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Here are some ways we make moving to music a part of the daily curriculum.

- ☐ We play different types of music and invite children to move to the beat; waltz, jazz and reggae, for example.
- ☐ We allow children to move to music in their own way, to create their own movements.
- ☐ We plan activities where children march, hop, gallop, bend and sway to music.
- ☐ We give children sheer or silky scarves to wave to the rhythm of the music.
- ☐ We play songs that involve children in moving like different animals, such as rabbits, elephants and snakes.

---

This is what happens when children are free to move to music throughout the day.

- Children are keeping themselves healthy by being active.
- Children are developing large muscles.
- Children are learning to control their bodies. This helps them feel good about what their bodies can do.
- Children are creative as they move to music in their own way.



## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

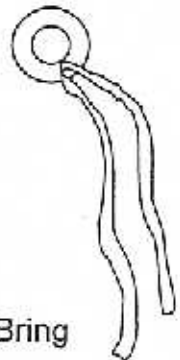
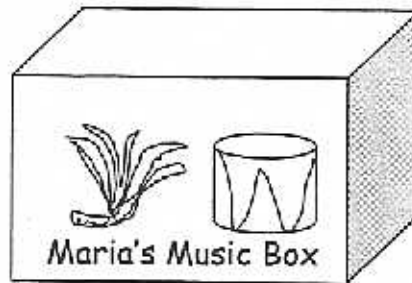
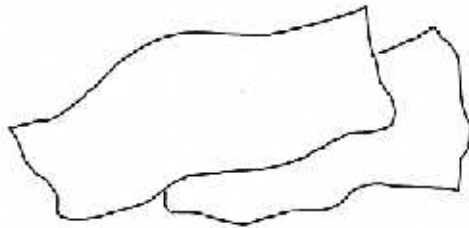
### Activity #8

#### "Moving to Music – A Natural for Your Child"

**You will need:** silky or sheer scarves  
newspaper, tape and blunt-tip scissors for making pom-poms  
plastic bracelets, rings or macramé rings and ribbon for making streamers

#### Try This!

- Collect scarves (2 or 3) your child can wave as he/she moves to music.  
Source: Scarves you haven't worn in years, donation from another family member, garage sales
- Make pom-poms and streamers:
  - Pom-poms – Roll half sheets of newspaper into stick shapes. Tape the bottom half to form a handle. Cut the top half into strips.
  - Streamers – Collect plastic bracelets, rings or macramé rings. Add ribbon (use 1 yard length for a double streamer) that you tie around the ring.
- Help your child prepare a container such as a box for storing music props.
  - Label the box "Music Box" and add the child's name.
  - Let your child decorate the box with pictures of musical instruments or pictures he/she draws.



- Encourage your child to play with the props in the "Music Box".
- Note: Invite a few of your child's friends over for a musical party. Bring out the "Music Box" with rhythm instruments and music props.
  - Provide a tape player and tapes of children's favorite songs.
  - Stand back and watch your child and friends move to music.

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #9

### "Making Sound Cans"

Developmental Learning Strand(s): Creative / Aesthetic Learning

Benchmark(s): 2.8 Identifies the source of a variety of sounds

Setting (when & where): Discovery / Science Center

Number of Children: Small group, 3-4 children

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Materials: empty film canisters, paper clips, rice, beans, aquarium gravel, cotton

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Steps:

1. Fill film canisters with some of the items listed above.
2. Make two of each type of sound can. For example, two with the same amount of rice, two with the same amount of beans, etc.
3. Place cans on the table in the Discovery/Science Center.
4. Invite children to shake the cans and match the two that sound alike.
5. Ask the children to predict what they think is in each can.
6. Open the cans and let children see the contents.
7. Compare their predictions with what they discover in the cans.

Ideas for extending the activity:

- Make the sound cans self-correcting by attaching like stickers to the bottom of matching cans. This allows children to check themselves.
- Encourage the children to suggest other items to place in the sound cans. Allow them to make their own sets of cans.

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #9

#### "Making Music"

Young children are fascinated by the sounds made by rhythm instruments. They like to play drums, maracas/shakers, rhythm sticks and tambourines. Children enjoy "making music."

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Here are some things we do in our classroom to introduce children to rhythm instruments.

- ☐ We provide rhythm instruments that children can play on their own. For example, we include drums, maracas/shakers, rhythm sticks and tambourines.
  - ☐ We show children the correct way to play the rhythm instruments.
  - ☐ We sometimes play instruments together and have a concert for ourselves.
  - ☐ We may invite a guest into our classroom to play an instrument for us.
  - ☐ We involve children in helping us make rhythm instruments from recyclable materials.
  - ☐ We play tapes or CDs of instrumental music and have children listen for the different instruments.
- 

This is what happens when children have daily opportunities to experiment with rhythm instruments.

- Children develop listening skills.
- Children learn about beat and rhythm.
- Children learn the names of musical instruments.
- Children learn about teamwork as they play rhythm instruments with others.

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #9

#### "Making Musical Shakers"

**You will need:** Materials such as

Empty water bottles	Clear plastic shampoo bottles	Plastic detergent bottles
Coffee cans	Oatmeal boxes	Film canisters
Dried gourds (with seeds)	Pea or aquarium gravel	Seeds (including acorns)
Tape or glue gun	Jingle bells	Beads

#### Try This!

- Involve your child in making one or more of the following types of shakers.
  - Bottle Shakers - fill dry empty plastic water bottles, clear plastic shampoo or detergent bottles with beads, colored aquarium gravel or jingle bells. Glue the lid on for safety.
  - Seed Shakers - place seeds inside empty plastic, metal or cardboard containers (coffee can, plastic bottle or oatmeal box). Use a variety of seeds (some small and some large, like acorns). Tightly seal the top with tape for safety.
  - Gourd Shakers – Look for gourds that have been dried. They will have their own seeds. Let children paint or decorate the gourds.
  - Film Canister Shakers – Place aquarium gravel or seeds inside the film canister. Glue the lid on tightly for safety.
- Encourage your child to use the shakers as he/she listens to music.
- Join in the fun as you and your child each have a shaker.
- Make enough shakers for each family member. Have a family band.



## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #10

#### "Read Aloud to Children"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Cognitive / Intellectual Learning (Language Arts)

**Benchmark(s):**

- 3.1 Shows enjoyment of books and stories and discussion of them
- 3.2 Tells a story in sequence, following pictures in a book
- 3.3 Demonstrates knowledge of how to use a book

**Setting (when & where):** Group Time and Learning Center Time – Book Center

**Number of Children:** Large Group or Small Group

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**Materials:** Children's picture book

**Refer to:** BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

**Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework: Benchmarks with Strategies/Activities for Three and Four Year Old Children**

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#### Steps:

##### Before reading:

1. Choose a book and read it ahead of time to familiarize yourself with the characters and story line.
2. Make sure all children are sitting comfortably where they can view the illustrations easily.
3. Discuss the illustration on the cover of the book and let children predict what the story might be about.
4. Read aloud the title, and the author and illustrator's names. (If you have read another book by the same author and illustrator, mention it here.)

##### During reading:

1. Hold the book to your side so children can see the illustrations as you read the story.
2. Read the story aloud to the children with expression.
3. Pause during the story and ask if their predictions are correct or if they would like to change their prediction.
4. Encourage the children to help you "read" by filling in words of familiar stories, and saying phrases that repeat.
5. Pause at the conclusion, allowing the children to digest the story and give their honest feedback.

##### After reading:

1. Talk about the story and the illustrations.
2. Decide if the predictions were correct.

##### Ideas for Extending the Activity:

- Keep the book in the Book Center for a few days so children can look at it on their own.
- Read the book to the children again at another time.
- Involve the children by letting them picture read the story back to you.
- If the book lends itself to another activity, plan time and materials for children to participate if they choose to. For example, you might plan for the children to bake chocolate chip cookies after reading *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* by Laura Numeroff.
- Share with parents books children have enjoyed listening to in class.
- Have books available for parents and children to check out and take home to read.
- Provide information about your local library such as procedures to check out books and story times.

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #10

#### "The Joy of Reading With Children"

The desire to read starts with the child's family. Good readers come from homes where families think reading is important and where children are read to regularly. Children enjoy a feeling of warmth and security as they cuddle up and read with a parent or other family member. In our classroom we build on what families are already doing to help their children become good readers.

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Here are some things we do in our classroom to help children enjoy reading.

- ☐ We read with children each day, sometimes in groups and sometimes with individual children.
- ☐ We encourage children to sit near us when we read with them.
- ☐ We read children's favorite books again and again.
- ☐ We encourage children to take part in the reading experience.

They add sound effects.

They join in when they know the next words or phrases.

They retell stories.

- ☐ We encourage children to spend time in the library area where they can select a book to read alone or with a friend.

---

This is what happens when children are read to daily at home and in their classroom.

- Children develop a positive attitude toward books and toward reading.
- Children learn to use and care for books.
- Children learn to retell a story in sequence.
- Children begin to recognize letters of the alphabet and read some words.



## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #10

### "The Joy of Reading With Your Child"

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**You will need:** Children's picture books (See list below for suggestions)

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#### Try This!

- Set aside a special time each day to read to your child.
- Read in a special place such as a comfortable chair away from distractions.
- Hold your child close to you when you read to help develop a positive attitude toward books.
- Let your child turn pages, repeat words, point to letters and look for details in pictures.
- Pause during the reading to talk about the story and the pictures.
- Read your child's favorite books over and over.

#### Places to find books:

Garage or yard sales  
Friends or relatives  
Your local library  
Book Clubs  
Book Stores



#### Favorite books to read to your child:

*The Mitten* by Jan Brett, Putnam. 1990.

*Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown, Harpercollins, 1947.  
Clement Hurd (illustrator)

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle. Putnam. 1981.

*Are You My Mother?* by P.D. Eastman. Random Books. 1960.

*Ask Mr. Bear* by Marjorie Flack. Macmillan. Reprint 1971.

*Corduroy* by Don Freeman. Viking. 1968.

*Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault.  
Simon & Schuster. 1989. Lois Ehlert (illustrator).

*If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* by Laura Numeroff. Harpercollins. 1985.  
Felicia Bond (illustrator).

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #11

#### "Connecting Families to Quality Children's Books"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Cognitive / Intellectual Learning (Language Arts)

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Families sometimes need guidance in selecting books. You can help parents acquire children's books at very reasonable prices by sending home order forms from book clubs. Quality books can be ordered from Scholastic Book Clubs or Trumpet Book Clubs for reasonable prices. The contact information for these book clubs is:

Scholastic Book Clubs 1-800-724-6527

[www.scholastic.com/bookclubs](http://www.scholastic.com/bookclubs)

The Trumpet Club 1-800-826-0110

[www.thetrumpetclub.com](http://www.thetrumpetclub.com)

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#### Tips on how to make family involvement in book clubs a success:

1. Begin by talking with your supervisor or director about becoming involved in a book club.
2. Request information from the book club(s).
3. Review the information to determine which book club is best for your families and for your classroom.
4. Involve parents in making the decision to become involved in a book club.
5. Explain to parents the benefits of a book club to their children and to the classroom.
  - a. Children are more likely to become good readers if they have books of their own.
  - b. This is an opportunity for families to buy quality books for their children at reasonable prices.
  - c. This is an opportunity to acquire additional books for the classroom, thus benefiting all children.
6. Make sure parents understand their obligations:
  - a. Return book orders on time.
  - b. Prepay for books as agreed.
7. Handle the book orders personally, if possible. This includes:
  - a. Distributing the order forms to parents
  - b. Receiving the order forms back from parents
  - c. Collecting and accounting for the money
  - d. Placing the order
  - e. Receiving and sorting the book order
  - f. Distributing the books to parents
8. Upon request give parents guidance in selecting books for their children.
9. **The Family Connection, Activity #11**, consists of a letter which you can copy or adapt to send home to families. We suggest the letter be personalized by adding the name, address, and phone number of your facility as well as a contact person.

#### Additional ideas for connecting families to quality children's books:

- Send home regular listings of quality children's books.
- Include a column with suggested book lists in each parent newsletter.
- Suggest that the book list be shared with grandparents or other relatives who are looking for gift ideas for a child.
- Suggest additional resources for quality books at reasonable prices.
  - Discount bookstores
  - Garage or yard sales
  - Thrift shops
  - Public library sales

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION



### Activity #11

Dear Families,

Your children really enjoy being read to each day. They like to look at books on their own or with a friend. Books are important in our classroom. Many of you have told us that books are also important in your home.

Each month, you will have an opportunity to purchase books for your children through \_\_\_\_\_. Your purchases will help in these ways.

- Your children are more likely to become good readers if they have books of their own.
- You will be able to buy quality books for your children at reasonable prices.
- You will be helping us acquire additional books for your child's classroom. We earn points toward the purchase of books when you purchase books through the book club.

This means everyone is a winner!

Here is how it works:

- Each month you will get a book order form. On the form is a brief description of each book available for the month.
- Choose the books you wish to order. Involve your child in the choosing.
- Turn in your completed order form and the correct payment to \_\_\_\_\_. Check or cash is accepted. You can get a receipt for cash.
- Turn in your order and payment by \_\_\_\_\_.
- Books ordered will be sent to us.
- We will distribute books to you when we receive them.

Talk with us if you need help in deciding which books to order.

Happy Reading!

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #12

#### "Creating an Inviting Library / Language Arts Area"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Cognitive / Intellectual Learning (Language Arts)

<b>Benchmark(s):</b>	3.1 Shows enjoyment of books and stories and discussion of them
	3.2 Tells a story in sequence, following the pictures in a book
	3.3 Demonstrates knowledge of how to use a book
	3.6 Demonstrates an interest in using writing for a purpose
	3.7 Identifies letters and signs in the environment
	3.8 Uses known letters or approximation of letters to represent written language

---

#### **Steps:**

1. Decide which of the following activities you want to occur in the area. This will help determine the size, location, furnishings and materials.  
Possibilities to include:
  - a. Reading/looking at books center
  - b. Listening center
  - c. Writing center
  - d. Support materials such as felt/magnetic board sets, puppets, language pictures, language games
2. Survey your classroom to determine where best to locate the center.

#### **Library Center**

1. Locate in an area that is not a pathway and is near other quiet activities such as art and table toys.
2. Light the area well. Natural light is best.
3. Furnish the area with soft pillows, beanbag cushions, a rug, a soft chair, a few stuffed animals or soft dolls.
4. Decorate the area with photos of children and adults reading, with book jackets or attractively displayed children's artwork. Place at child's eye level.
5. Provide a book display shelf.
6. Display the books with the covers facing forward for easier selection by children.
7. Place puppets, felt and/or magnetic sets and picture file in the Library Center.
8. Spend some time in the library center during that part of the day when children select centers in which to play.
9. Model and discuss with children how to use and care for books and other language materials.

#### **Listening Center:**

1. Locate near an electrical outlet. Consider safety issues.
2. Include the following:
  - a. Table and chairs
  - b. Tape recorder, headsets, jack
  - c. Story tapes and books
  - d. Music tapes
  - e. Storage containers for tapes

**Note:** Consider purchasing tapes and books in Spanish if you have children whose home language is Spanish. See school supply catalogs for titles.

**Benchmark Activity #12 cont. "Creating an Inviting Library / Language Arts Area"**

**Writing Center:**

1. Provide a table and chairs. (child-size)
2. Refer to **Benchmark Activity #14 "Establishing an Area for Writing"** for a list of suggested materials to include in the Writing Center.
3. Allow children to write whenever they are interested. Never force them to practice writing.

**Note:** Locate storage shelves and containers in the area as needed.

Use picture and word labels on shelves and containers so children will know exactly where particular materials are stored.

For additional information on the Library Center refer to:

Dodge, D.T. *Caring for Preschool Children, Volume 1, Second Edition*. Functional Area: Learning Environment (1996). Teaching Strategies, Washington, D.C.

Dodge, D.T., L. Colker, and C. Heroman. *Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Fourth Edition*. (2002). Teaching Strategies, Washington, D.C.

Machado, J. M. *Early Childhood Experiences in Language Arts* (1999). Delmar Publishers, Albany.

## **THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION**

### **Activity #12**

#### **"The Library or Reading Center"**

When you visit our classroom you may see children in the library or reading center. The library in our classroom is a place where children can go to enjoy the wonderful world of books. In the library, children are free to relax and concentrate. They are free to look at a book alone or with a friend.

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**Here are some things we do to create a library center that is a place where children want to spend time.**

- ☐ We try to locate the library center in an area that is quiet and out of the flow of traffic.
- ☐ We furnish the area with soft chairs, pillows, rugs or cushions to make it comfortable and relaxing.
- ☐ We display the books so children can see the covers. This makes it easier for them to select a book.
- ☐ We talk with the children about how to use and care for books.
- ☐ We spend time each day in the library center reading with one or two children.

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**This is what happens when children spend time in the library or reading center in our classroom.**

- Children acquire a love for books.
- Children develop the motivation and skills to read.
- Children learn to use and care for books.



## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #12

#### "Create a Reading Area for Your Child"

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**You will need:** Picture books  
Basket or bookshelf

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#### Try This!

- Store your child's books in a special place such as in a basket or drawer, or on a low shelf.
- Place a small rug or pillows in an area to create a cozy and comfortable place for reading.
- Join your child and enjoy reading a book together.
- Talk with your child as you enjoy reading a book together.  
For example:

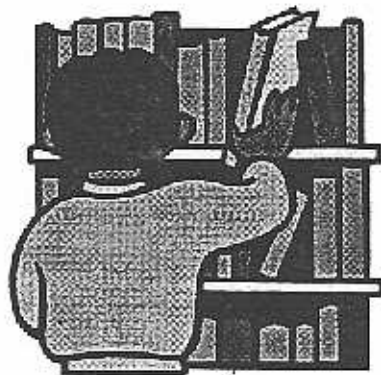
Talk with your child about the illustration and information on the cover of the book, for example the title, author (person who wrote the story) and illustrator (person who drew the pictures).

Show your child how to start at the beginning of the book and how to turn the pages.

Show your child how to return books to their storage place.

#### **Additional ideas:**

Bring along a book bag containing some of your child's favorite books when you leave home. Your child can read in the car, on the bus, at the laundromat or at the doctor's office. You can read to your child as you wait together.



## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #13

### "Story Dictation"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Cognitive / Intellectual Learning (Language Arts)

**Benchmark(s):**

- 3.5 Understands that print conveys a message
- 3.6 Demonstrates an interest in using writing for a purpose
- 3.7 Identifies letters and signs in the environment
- 3.9 Identifies some letters and makes some letter-sound matches

**Setting (when & where):** Group Time and Learning Center Time

**Number of Children:** Large group or small group and individual child

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**Materials:** unlined paper, markers or crayons

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**Steps:**

1. Provide an experience for the children, for example go on a listening walk, invite a community helper to visit your classroom, or make playdough. Refer to **Benchmark Activity #19 "Taking Our Senses Outdoors"** for additional information.
2. During group time or in small groups discuss what you saw or did.
3. During center time, invite each child to tell you a story about the experience.
4. Repeat what the child says and write what he/she says at the bottom of a sheet of paper. Use the child's exact words. Make sure the child can watch you as you write.
5. Read the final story to the child.
6. Provide markers or crayons so each child can illustrate their story.

**Note:** At times story dictation can occur after the child has drawn their illustration. Then ask permission to write on the child's paper. You might offer to write their story on the bottom, on the top, on the back of their paper or on another piece of paper that you can attach to their illustration.

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #13

#### How Many Ways Do We Say "Reading and Writing are Important in Our Classroom?"

Many preschool children come to us already knowing a great deal about reading and writing. They have gained much of this literacy knowledge from their families. They may have seen family members reading and writing. Family members may have frequently read to their children. These actions tell children that reading and writing are important to their families.

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Here are some things we do to tell children that reading and writing are important in our classroom.

- ☐ We read to children several times each day.
- ☐ We place children's picture books in many centers in our classroom.
- ☐ We let children see us write their names, attendance records and notes, for example.
- ☐ We make and post signs and charts at children's eye level.
- ☐ We add printed materials such as telephone books, magazines and grocery store ads in the home living center.
- ☐ We have an area of the classroom stocked with pencils, washable markers, crayons and different types of paper.
- ☐ We let children write whenever they are interested, while never forcing them to practice writing.

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This is what happens when children participate in reading and writing experiences in our classroom.

- Children enjoy participating in reading and writing activities in a group or on their own.
- Children are getting the foundation they will need for reading and writing in kindergarten and the primary grades.
- Children are learning
  - To recognize letters of the alphabet and some sounds
  - To write their names
  - To read signs

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #13

#### "A Reading and Writing Checklist for Our Family"

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**You will need:** Nothing

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#### **Try This!**

Check off the reading and writing activities your child has recently observed.

- ☐ I read aloud a grocery store ad and made a shopping list.
- ☐ I asked my child to help me make a grocery list.
- ☐ I left a note for a family member.
- ☐ I wrote a note to my child's teacher.
- ☐ I read aloud the TV weather report.
- ☐ I wrote a check and addressed an envelope for mailing the check.
- ☐ I read a book or magazine for information or pleasure.
- ☐ I read a book to my child.
- ☐ I bought a book for my child.
- ☐ I read a family letter to my child.
- ☐ I looked up a phone number, wrote it down and dialed it.
- ☐ I read the newspaper.
- ☐ I read an E-mail message.
- ☐ I read aloud a road or street sign.
- ☐ I read aloud a menu in a restaurant.
- ☐ I read a recipe or the instructions on a food package.



How many items did you check on the survey?

Did you discover new ways to say to your child that reading and writing are important in your family? **TRY THEM!**

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #14

#### "Establishing an Area for Writing"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Cognitive / Intellectual Learning (Language Arts)

**Benchmark(s):**

- 3.5 Understands that print conveys a message
- 3.6 Demonstrates an interest in using writing for a purpose
- 3.8 Uses known letters or approximation of letters to represent written language

**Setting (when & where):** Writing Center (May be part of Library/Literacy Center)

**Number of Children:** All

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**Materials:** Assorted writing tools, paper and support materials

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**Steps:**

1. Establish a writing center or area for writing in your classroom. It can be part of the library center, for example.
2. Include in the center a variety of writing tools, types of paper and support materials.
  - a. Writing tools: thick and regular pencils, black and colored lead, washable markers, crayons, chalk
  - b. Paper: unlined and lined, construction paper, small blank books, pads of paper, index cards, envelopes and stationery, computer printout paper
  - c. Support materials: chalkboards, blunt-tip scissors, hole punch, paper clips, stapler
3. Let children write whenever they are interested, while never forcing them to practice writing.

**Ideas for Extending the Activity:**

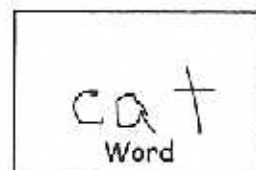
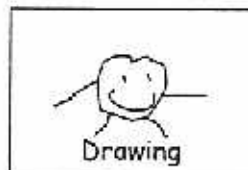
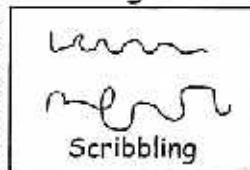
- Keep paper and writing tools in various areas of the classroom. For example in the block center to make signs and in the home living center to write a grocery list or take a restaurant order.
- If you have asphalt or concrete on your playground, take colored chalk outdoors for children to use.
- **Portfolio:**
  - Collect samples of each child's writing to add to his/her portfolio.
  - Add writing samples to the portfolio every month or so. Date samples.
  - Place the samples in order from the first one to the last one collected.
  - Share each child's writing samples with his/her family.
  - Call attention to the writing skills the child has mastered.

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #14

#### "The Write Stuff"

Long before children learn to print letters they may use pencils, crayons, markers and chalk. These materials are tools for writing. As children experiment with these materials, they progress through developmental stages of writing. These developmental stages can be observed in the following illustrations.



Here are some things we do in our classroom to encourage children to practice their developing writing skills.

- ☐ We stock our room with "tools for writing."  
Crayons      Washable markers      Pencils      Chalk
- ☐ We have lots of paper available for them; lined and unlined paper.
- ☐ We add additional items.  
Old stationery and envelopes      Small chalk boards      Cancelled stamps  
Ink pads and stamps      Small marker boards      Note pads
- ☐ We make sure these materials are available for children to use whenever they choose.
- ☐ We never force children to practice writing. For example, we do not ask them to practice writing a row of "A's."

This is what happens when children have opportunities to practice their developing writing skills.

- Children are getting the foundation for writing they will need in kindergarten and the primary grades.
- Children are eager to practice writing on their own.
- Children are learning that what they write means something; that it can be read by themselves and by someone else.

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #14

#### "The Write Stuff"

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<b>You will need:</b>	pencils	chalk
	washable markers	small chalk board
	crayons	
	paper: unlined and lined, notepads, envelopes & stationery	
	storage container for the materials	

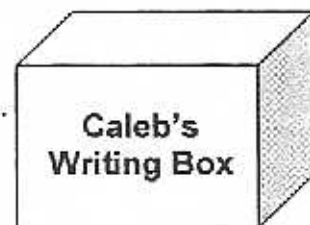
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#### Try This!

- Observe your child to see if he/she shows an interest in writing. For example, does your child ask to use your pen or pencil?
- Ask your child's teacher if your child has shown an interest in writing in the classroom.

#### If your child shows an interest in writing, consider these ideas:

- Involve your child in selecting a storage container for writing materials. An empty boot box is a good size.
- Help your child label the container; for example **Writing Box**, with his/her name added.
- Assist your child to collect items for the writing box.
- Help your child to decide where to keep the writing box.
- Let your child write whenever he/she is interested.
- Never force your child to practice writing.



**Note:** Fill a tote bag or backpack with paper, crayons, books and other things for writing and reading. Take it with you when you do errands, take a trip or wait for the doctor, barber, or for a bus. Your child can enjoy these activities while waiting.





## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #15A

#### "BINGO Game Boards"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Cognitive / Intellectual Learning (Language Arts)

**Benchmark(s):** 3.4 Demonstrates visual discrimination skills  
3.9 Identifies some letters and makes some letter-sound matches

**Setting (when & where):** Learning Center Time

**Number of Children:** Small group, 4-6 children

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**Materials:** card stock, permanent markers, laminate or clear contact paper, objects such as buttons or plastic milk jug caps for markers

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**Steps:**

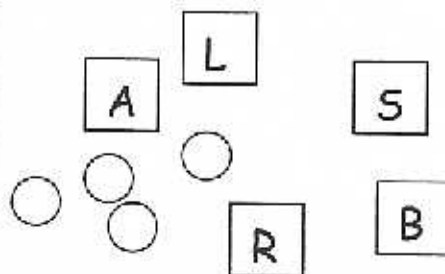
1. Prepare at least 6 bingo game boards:
  - a. Cut card stock into 6" x 6" game boards
  - b. Divide into 9 squares, 3 rows of 3
  - c. Label each square with a letter of the alphabet (use all letters)
  - d. Prepare 26 calling cards (1 for each letter)
  - e. Laminate boards and calling cards
2. To play bingo with children:
  - a. Play with 4-6 children
  - b. Tell them the game is over when all letters on the cards are covered
  - c. Place the calling cards in a basket
  - d. Give each child a bingo board and 9 markers
  - e. Randomly draw a letter (calling card) from the basket
  - f. Show the letter and announce it
  - g. Children will cover the letter if it is on their cards.
  - h. The game ends when all letters on each child's card are covered
  - i. If the children can play the game without you, allow them to do so

**NOTE:** Use all upper case letters for one set of game boards and calling cards. Make another set using only lower case letters. Use the sets at separate times. Use proper print script when forming the letters.

#### Ideas for Extending the Activity

Consider having families make game boards and calling cards at a parent meeting. Play the game with them as it should be played with children. Emphasize that there should be no winners or losers. The purpose of the game is to help the child recognize and name letters of the alphabet.

A	S	L
C	M	R
B	F	D



## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #15B

### "Sorting Socks"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Cognitive / Intellectual Learning (Language Arts/Math)

**Benchmark(s):** 3.4 Demonstrates visual discrimination skills  
3.10 Classifies objects by physical features such as shape or color

**Setting (when & where):** Learning Center Time - Table

**Number of Children:** 1-2 children

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**Materials:** Small basket, box or other container  
Collection of a number of pairs of socks

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**Steps:**

1. Collect a number of pairs of socks
  - a. Make sure each pair of socks is easy to distinguish from other pairs
  - b. Have some socks with distinct patterns
2. Place the socks in a container
3. Label the container "Sort the Socks" – Include a picture of a pair of socks
4. Place the container on a table or the floor
5. Observe the children as they examine and explore the socks.
6. Make comments based on what children are doing with the socks. For example, if a child is finding pairs, say, "I see you are finding the socks that go together/match. That's call a pair of socks." If a child is not finding pairs, select a sock with a distinct pattern and invite the child to find the matching sock.

#### An Alternate Approach

Place the socks in a container in the home living center. Suggest that children find socks in the basket that go together/match. Encourage the children to roll the pairs of socks together.

**NOTE:** If appropriate, ask parents for a donation of pairs of discarded socks.



## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #15

#### "Seeing Likenesses and Differences"

Picture in your mind the letters of the alphabet. Some letters, like "b" and "d" can easily be confused with each other, especially by preschool children. Children have to learn to see likenesses and differences in letters of the alphabet before they are ready to read and write. The ability to see likenesses and differences is called **visual discrimination**.

---

Here are some things we do in our classroom to help children see likenesses and differences (visual discrimination skills).

- ☐ We provide materials such as:
  - puzzles
  - shape blocks with pattern cards
  - pegs and pegboards
  - stringing beads and laces
- ☐ We make a name card for each child and use the cards in daily classroom activities. For example, we call roll by showing the name cards and asking children to identify the name on the card.
- ☐ We play games such as:
  - Lotto with matching pictures, colors and shapes
  - Dominoes with either matching pictures or numbers of dots
  - Alphabet bingo

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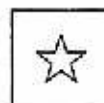
This is what happens when children develop the ability to see likenesses and differences in objects and pictures.

- Children are successful in using classroom materials and playing games that require visual discrimination skills.
- Children learn to recognize their own names and the names of the other children in their group.
- Children learn to recognize colors and shapes

## Activity #15

### THE FAMILY CONNECTION

#### "Seeing Likenesses and Differences"



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**You will need:** Pairs of matching cards such as Go Fish or Old Maid

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#### Try This!

- Play a matching game with your child, using cards such as Go Fish or Old Maid.
- Start with a few pairs of matching cards, six pairs, for example.
- Shuffle the cards and lay them face up on a table or on the floor.
- Invite your child to find the two cards that match.
- Add additional pairs of cards as your child becomes more skilled at finding the pairs.

#### Additional Suggestions:

- Play dominoes with your child, matching the number of dots.
- Buy puzzles appropriate for the age of your child.
- Make matching pairs of cards with stickers or pictures of animals, for example:
  - Cut cardboard, tag board or poster board in 3" x 3" squares
  - Place a sticker or picture on a card. Make a second card exactly like the first one.
  - Play the matching game with your child.

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #16

### "Things That Go Together"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Cognitive / Intellectual Learning (Math)

**Benchmark(s):** 3.10 Classifies objects by physical features such as shape or color  
3.11 Classifies objects conceptually (things that go together)

**Setting (when & where):** Small group at table

**Number of Children:** 3-4 children at a time or individual children

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**Materials:** Objects that go together:

shoe/sock	crayon/paper	spoon/fork	soap/washcloth
comb/brush	hammer/nail	flower/vase	cup/saucer

---

**Steps:**

1. Gather a group of items that go together. See above list for examples.
2. Invite a small group of children to play a game with you.
3. Place the items on a table. Make sure the items that go together are separated from each other.
4. Ask each child in turn to select two items that go together and explain his/her choice.

**Note:** You may have to get the game started by selecting an item and asking the children to find the item that goes with it.

You may want to introduce the game as follows:

1. Place the items on the table and allow the children to play with them.
2. Observe to see if they sort and classify the objects.
3. If they do sort and classify, make appropriate comments such as "I notice that you put the comb and brush together."

**Ideas for extending the activity:**

- Provide materials of the same shape and color:  
Unit blocks, attribute blocks, parquetry blocks, pegs and pegboards, stringing beads, counting bears of different colors, crayons.
- Provide commercial or teacher-made two-piece puzzles of paired items; items that go together. Puzzles should be self-correcting so that one piece fits only one other piece.

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #16

#### "Sorting Stuff: Things that Go Together"

Learning to sort or group (classify) objects into categories is a very important math skill for preschool children. They learn to sort, or put together, objects by shape or color. For example, they put all crayons of the same color together. They also learn to put together objects that go together. For example, they put a pencil with paper and a hammer with nails. This process of sorting or grouping objects is called **classification**.

---

Here are some things we do in our classroom to help children learn to sort (classify) objects.

- ☐ We begin by giving children real objects such as socks or plastic bottle caps to sort by color.
- ☐ We provide crayons, pegs and stringing beads of the same color.
- ☐ We store all blocks of the same shape together on the block shelf.
- ☐ We play sorting games with real objects just like those suggested in **The Family Connection**.
- ☐ We give children two-piece puzzles of items that go together. For example, one piece of the puzzle might be a fork and the other a spoon.

---

This is what happens when children have opportunities to sort real objects.

- Children are learning the first math skill, which is to classify objects into categories.
- Children are building a foundation for more advanced math skills such as addition and subtraction.

## Activity #16

# THE FAMILY CONNECTION

## "Sorting Stuff at Home"

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**You will need:**    Eating utensils:  
                             Forks, spoons, and knives (without sharp edges)  
                             Groceries  
                             Laundry

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### Try This!

- Invite your child to sort and put away eating utensils after dishes are done. **Note:** This works best if you have a divided tray for storing clean utensils so that all forks can be put together, all spoons together, and all knives together, or use separate containers such as a can for each type of eating utensil.
- Involve your child in sorting groceries to be put away. He/she can divide boxes from cans, bathroom items from kitchen items and paper products from food items, for example.
- Involve your child in sorting the clean laundry. He/she can sort clothes into piles of shirts, shorts, pants, underwear and socks, for example.
- Provide labeled storage containers such as tubs, baskets or boxes for your child's toys. For example, have one container for colored blocks, one for farm animals and one for toy cars.
- Help your child learn to sort and store toys in the appropriate containers.





## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #17

#### "The Three Bears – From Smallest to Largest"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Cognitive / Intellectual Learning (Math)

**Benchmark(s):** 3.14 Demonstrates the ability to order and sequence

**Setting (when & where):** Group Time or Learning Center Time

**Number of Children:** Large or small group, 4-6 children

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**Materials:** Book: *The Three Bears* by Paul Galdone, 3 bears in 3 sizes, 3 bowls in 3 sizes

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#### Steps:

1. Read the story, *The Three Bears*.
2. Invite the children to retell the story in order of events.
3. Discuss with the children that each bear had a bowl, a chair and a bed.
4. Guide the children to discuss the bears, bowls, chairs and beds by size, from smallest to largest.

#### Ideas for Extending the Activity:

- Provide three sizes of bears and discuss with the children the sizes, labeling the bears as "baby," "mama" and "papa."
  - Ask the children to put the bears in order from smallest to largest.
  - Add three sizes of bowls and suggest that the children give each bear the correct bowl.
  - Add the bears and bowls to the home living center or to the library center.
- Provide three sizes of chairs, beds (beach towel, large bath towel and small bath towel), and bowls for the children to dramatize the story.
- After children have had many experiences sequencing concrete materials, try these activities:
  - Make sequence cards of cooking/food experiences, planting, daily schedule, letters of the alphabet.
  - Include words and illustrations/pictures on the cards.
  - Involve children in putting the cards in sequential order and explaining why they did so.
- Purchase sequencing activities from school supply catalogs/stores.

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #17

#### "Putting Things In Order"

As we listen to children at play, we hear them say things such as "I have the biggest truck." Or "She's littler than me." Without realizing it, children are using mathematical terms. They are putting things or people in order by size. This process is called "sequencing" or "ordering" and is an important math skill.

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Here are some things we do in our classroom to help children learn to put things in order.

- ☐ We read or tell stories such as *The Three Bears* that tells about bears of three sizes. Children retell the story and put the bears in order from "baby bear" to "mama bear" to "papa bear."
- ☐ We read books or tell stories such as *The Three Little Pigs* that include the "first", the "second" and the "third" pigs.
- ☐ We read books such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle that put the days of the week in order.
- ☐ We provide balancing scales and items for weighing to determine which is the "heaviest."

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This is what happens when children are involved in ordering and sequencing activities.

- Children learn to put things in order by size, for example.
- Children use math words such as "smallest/ littlest," "middle size," "largest/biggest."
- Children use math words such as "first," "second," and "third."
- Children are beginning to understand "more" and "less."
- Children are learning that numbers go in order from "one" to "two" to "three," for example.

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #17

#### "Growing Up"

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**You will need:** Photos of your child as a baby, a toddler and at present age (now)

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#### Try This!

- Sit down with your child and look at the photos together.
- Talk with your child about what he/she could do and not do at each age.
- Suggest that your child put the pictures in order (sequence) from youngest to the current one.

**If your child enjoyed the activity, consider this idea:**

Choose a time when the family members in your home are all together. Involve your child in putting the family members in order (sequence) from shortest to tallest.





## Activity #18

### "Let's Play Musical Numbers"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Cognitive / Intellectual (Math)

**Benchmark(s):** 3.15 Demonstrates an understanding of **number** (how many) and **numeral** (3 is a numeral) relationship (**numeration**)

**Setting (when & where):** Group Time or Learning Center Time

**Number of Children:** Large or small group

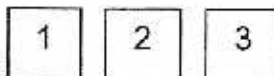
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**Materials:** Teacher made cards with numeral and tape recorder and music tape or CD player and CD

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#### Steps:

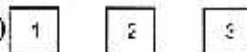
1. Prepare cards (6" x 6") with one numeral on each card.



Number of cards to make will be determined by the ability of the children in your group. Consider starting with 1 to 10. Then add additional cards up to 20 as children are ready.

Have enough cards for number of children playing the game. For example, if more than 10 children are to play at one time, make an additional card for some of the numerals.

2. Prepare a set of small matching cards (2" x 2")



3. Laminate both sets of cards, or cut your cards from solid color vinyl placemats. The numeral should be written with a permanent marker.

#### To Play Musical Numbers:

1. Place the large numeral cards on the floor in a circle. Have the same number of cards as children.
2. Place small cards in basket.
3. Play a song for a few seconds and have children walk around the circle.
4. Randomly draw a numeral card from the basket.
5. When the music stops each child puts his/her toe on one of the cards on the floor.
6. Hold up the small card and proceed in one of the following ways:  
As you show the card say "Who is standing on the numeral 6?" OR  
As you show the card, let the children identify the numeral and say who is standing on that numeral.
7. Continue the game, drawing different numeral cards from the basket. Play the game as long as children remain interested.

**NOTE:** If there are two adults in the room, one might start and stop the music, while the other draws the card. You might also beat a drum instead of playing music.

#### Ideas for Extending the Activity

Make Number Bingo cards. Refer to **Benchmark Activity #15A, "Bingo Game Boards"** for steps to follow. Use numerals instead of letters of the alphabet.

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #18

#### "Numbers are Everywhere"

Children learn about numbers in their everyday home and classroom experiences. They count crackers and crayons. They count the people in their family and in their classroom. They use a measuring cup as they help prepare oatmeal for breakfast. They learn to recognize a written numeral such as "5" and know that is how old they are. They are learning about numbers everyday and everywhere.

---

Here are some things we do in our classroom to help children learn about numbers.

- ☐ We involve children in counting activities such as giving each child four crackers for snack.
- ☐ We play games such as number bingo and dominoes with dots.
- ☐ We sing songs such as "Six Little Ducks" and say finger plays such as "Five Little Monkeys."
- ☐ We involve children in using materials for measuring; for example we provide measuring cups and spoons in water and sand play, and rulers and measuring tapes in the block area.
- ☐ We give children materials such as counting bears, number stamps, and telephones to use in their play.

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This is what happens when children participate in classroom activities that focus on numbers.

- Children are able to successfully play games that involve numbers.
- Children learn to use number words such as "one," "two," and "three."
- Children learn to recognize written numerals such as "1," "2," and "3."
- Children learn about measuring.
- Children are gaining the foundation for learning to add and subtract.

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #18

#### "Numbers and Measuring: How Many?"

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**You will need:** Plastic tub  
Plastic measuring cups and spoons  
Clear plastic liter soft drink bottles  
Plastic funnels  
Sponge

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#### Try This!

- Place 2 or 3 inches of water in a plastic tub.
- Put a towel under the tub to absorb water spills.
- Add plastic measuring cups and spoons, plastic liter bottles and plastic funnels in the tub with water.
- Invite your child to play with the items in the water.
- Discuss with our child rules for playing in the water tub. For example:  
Water stays in the tub.  
Should there be an accidental spill, use the sponge to wipe up water.
- Give your child time to play with the objects in the water. Observe to see what he/she does.
- Ask your child how many cups of water he/she thinks it will take to fill the container.
- Help your child count the cups of water it takes to fill the container. Keep in mind that this is not a "test" and that your child is learning while experimenting with the measuring materials.

**NOTES:** Cover your child's clothing with a "water play" shirt or apron.  
Roll up sleeves if child is wearing a shirt with long sleeves.

**If your child enjoyed the activity, consider this idea:**  
Let your child play with a ruler or measuring tape.



## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #19

### "Taking Our Senses Outdoors"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Cognitive / Intellectual (Science)

**Benchmark(s):**

- 3.19 Shows interest in exploring the environment
- 3.20 Uses senses to learn about the characteristics of the environment and to collect data (scientific process: observing)
- 3.21 Uses words to describe the characteristics of objects (scientific process: communicating)

**Setting (when & where):** Outdoors

**Number of Children:** Large or small group

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**Materials:** Books about Senses:

*My Five Senses* by Alike, HarperCollins, 1962.

*Sense Suspense: A Guessing Game for the Five Senses* by Bruce McMillan, Scholastic, 1994.

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**Steps:**

Plan this activity over a period of time (a week for example.) Focus on one of the senses at a time.

**Look What I See? (Focus on the sense of sight)**

1. Explain to children that everyone will go outdoors for a special activity. They will be using one of their senses, their eyes, to observe what is around them.
2. Take children to the playground or to a nearby park for the activity.
3. Ask children to predict what they think they will see outside. Write down their predictions. Compare what they saw with their predictions when they return indoors.
4. Play "I Spy." Say to the children, "I spy something that has feathers and is sitting in a tree." Children might use spy glasses made of paper towel tubes for focusing on an object.
5. Provide binoculars for looking at something far away, for example, an airplane or a bird flying overhead.
6. Hide things around the playground in places where they blend in with the coloring of the environment. Talk about how animals and bugs use "camouflage" for protection. Invite children to go on a "seeing" treasure hunt.
7. Lie on your backs and watch the clouds go by.
8. Use a piece of string or yarn to encircle an area of the playground where there is dirt or grass. Involve children in looking for ants or bugs.
9. Allow children time to observe their environment on their own. Make sure that children only look at and talk about bugs and ants and do not destroy them.
10. Return to the classroom for a follow-up activity. For example, in small groups, let children dictate a story about what they saw. Make a Senses Book for each child with one page per sense. Invite each child to tell you what he/she saw outdoors and write what the child dictates. Suggest that each child draw a picture to illustrate what he/she saw.

**Do You Hear What I Hear? (Focus on listening and hearing)**

1. Explain to children that everyone will go outdoors for a special activity. They will be using one of their senses, their ears, to hear what is around them.



### **Benchmark Activity #19 cont. "Taking Our Senses Outdoors"**

2. Take children to the playground or to a nearby park for the activity.
3. Sit in a circle and ask children to close their eyes when they first go outdoors. Ask that they listen and see if they can identify the sounds they are hearing.
4. Take an old stethoscope outside and listen to quiet sounds. Listen to sounds that come out of the ground, the sidewalk and trees.
5. Take a drumstick or rhythm stick outdoors. Invite children to experiment with striking different objects and listen to the different sounds each makes. (For example, a tree, the fence, playground equipment and the ground.)
6. Allow children to listen to sounds on their own.
7. Return to the classroom for a follow-up activity. For example, in small groups, let children dictate a story about what they heard outdoors. Add a page to the Senses Book for each child. Invite each child to tell you what he/she heard outdoors and write what the child dictates. Suggest that each child draw a picture to illustrate what he/she heard.

#### **Feel This! (Focus on touching and feeling)**

1. Take children to the playground or to a nearby park for the activity.
2. Take a "feely" walk. Encourage children to touch gently and describe the things they feel.
3. Take lightweight paper and smooth crayons. Show children how to do rubbings. Make rubbings of tree bark and sidewalks, for example.
4. Follow up as for other senses.

#### **Follow Your Nose (Focus on the sense of smell)**

1. Select a time when the outdoors has some obvious smells for children to experience. (For example, just after grass has been mowed, after a shower/rain, when flowers are in bloom.)
2. Explain to children that everyone will go outdoors for a special activity. They will be using one of their senses, their nose, to smell what is around them.
3. Take children to the playground or to a nearby park for the activity.
4. Ask children to sit in a circle outdoors, close their eyes and use their noses to smell all the different things they can.
5. Ask children which smells they like and which they don't like.
6. Take a "smell" walk to sniff plants, grass, dirt, metal and wood.
7. Hide \_\_\_\_\_ with a strong odor and ask children to follow their noses until they find it. (Wrap sliced onion or a sliced lemon in a mesh bag)
8. Allow time for children to use their senses on their own.
9. Follow up as for other senses.

#### **A Tasty Outdoor Idea (Focus on the sense of taste)**

1. Have a tasting party outside if permitted by your program.
2. Make sure children wash hands before going outdoors.
3. Take a roll of paper towels outdoors.
4. Include items that grow outdoors such as several kinds of fruits or vegetables, or foods that are salty (pretzels), sour (pickles) and sweet (bananas and apples). Put items for tasting in individual sandwich bags.
5. Spread a sheet or blanket on the ground or on a picnic table.
6. Children can use paper towels for foods and for cleaning hands.
7. Ask children to compare the tastes of the foods and choose their favorite.
8. Have children place used paper towels in trash bags brought out for that purpose.
9. Ask children if food tastes better outdoors.
10. Follow up as for other senses.

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #19

#### "Using Our Senses"

Have you ever heard someone ask, "Why does that child have to touch everything in sight?" The answer is simple. By touching things, the child is learning about his world, his environment. Children explore and learn by touching, tasting, seeing, hearing and smelling. We say they are learning through their senses. This is sometimes called "sensory learning."

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Here are some things we do in our classroom and outdoors to make sure that children have many opportunities to use their senses.

- ☐ We include materials of different textures; such as sand, cotton balls, rocks, shells, playdough and textured wallpaper samples.
- ☐ We take children outdoors to observe and listen to the sounds of nature. For example, they can observe the movement of leaves on a windy day, hear the birds singing, watch clouds moving across the sky and watch water evaporate on the sidewalk.
- ☐ We plan tasting activities that include foods that are salty (pretzels), sweet (bananas) and sour (pickles).
- ☐ We provide magnifying glasses for children to explore objects.

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This is what happens when children use their senses as they work and play.

- Children learn about science through their senses.
- Children become aware of changes in their natural environment through their senses. For example:
  - They feel, hear and see changes in weather (wind, rain, sun, snow, lightning, thunder).
  - They learn to recognize different colors as they see the leaves changing colors and see flowers blooming.
- Children learn to identify items by smell or taste. (For example, as they taste and/or smell different foods.)

## Activity #19

### THE FAMILY CONNECTION "Take a Look and Listen Walk"



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**You will need:** You and your child

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#### Try This!

- Find a safe place for taking a walk with your child.
- Take a walk with no time limit so your child can have time to explore.
- Allow your child to safely explore the area where you are walking.

Encourage your child to be a good observer and listener. For example, if your child does not notice, point out the ants and bugs that are crawling on the ground, comment that you hear the birds singing, that you see the clouds moving or see the wind blowing the leaves in the trees.

- Allow your child to collect safe objects such as fallen leaves, pinecones and rocks. You might take a basket with a handle or a paper sack in which to collect the items.

#### If your child enjoyed the activity, consider this idea:

- Take along a camera and take several pictures of your child and his/her discoveries.
- Look at pictures when developed and talk with your child about the walk.



## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #20A

### "Family Trees"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Cognitive / Intellectual (Social Studies)  
Social / Emotional (Interact Socially)

**Benchmark(s):** 3.27 Identifies self as a member of a specific family and cultural group  
1.15 Understands and respects differences

**Setting (when & where):** Table

**Number of Children:** Small group, 2-4 at a time

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**Materials:** Tree for each child (construction paper).  
Photos of family members, masking tape, blunt-tip scissors

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**Steps:**

1. Send home a note to parents telling them that the children will be making their individual family trees.
2. Ask parents to send pictures of grandparents, parents, the child and siblings. Request that they include names and relationship on the back of each photo.
3. Make your own family tree with the children to illustrate the concept of a family tree.
4. Have a tree for each child. It can be pre-drawn and children can cut out their tree, trees can be cut out in advance, or children can draw their own tree.
5. Involve children in a small group of 2-4 in making their own family tree. To prevent damage to the photo use rolled masking tape to attach photos to the family tree. Assist as needed.
6. Write the name of each person on the tree from information dictated by the children and from information on backs of photos.
7. Invite each child to share his/her family tree with the other children. Be sensitive to children who do not want to share their family tree.
8. Post the family trees where children can see them.
9. Send the family trees home with the children, along with a note of thanks to parents for sharing the photos.

**Note:** If this activity is inappropriate for your group of children, use magazine pictures to categorize age groups. Pictures should reflect diversity.

Alternative idea: Write the names of family members on the family tree if photos are not an option. The children can help read back the names.

Alternative idea: Send home a sample of a family tree and a blank tree. Suggest that families work together to create their family tree.

## Activity #20

### THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

#### "Each Child's Family Is Special"

Each child comes to our classroom from a different family background. Each family has its own traditions, including the way it celebrates holidays. Each family has its favorite foods. Some families may speak a language at home that is different from the language spoken in the classroom. Children bring their different family structures, traditions and sometimes language to our classroom.

---

Here are some ways we help children stay connected to their family while being accepted as a member of our classroom community.

- ☐ We get to know each child and his/her family.
- ☐ We welcome family members to visit our classroom. They are invited to share things about their family with us.
- ☐ We help children understand how they are both alike and different from each other. For example: hair, eye color, clothing, food, members of a family, and different abilities.
- ☐ We include materials and experiences that represent different kinds of families. We include books, pictures and photos, music, clothing, food and cultural objects such as cooking utensils.
- ☐ We learn and use some key words and phrases from a child's home language when necessary.

---

This is what happens when children from different family backgrounds share the same classroom.

- Children are proud to belong to their individual families.
- Children learn to understand and respect differences in people.
- Children learn to be a part of a classroom community that may be similar to the kindergarten class they will enter.

## Activity #20

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### "Our Family Is Special"

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**You will need:** Family photos, recipes, objects that reflect family celebrations

---

#### Try This!

- Look at family photos with your child.
- Talk with your child about the different relatives in the family photos.
- Let your child know when you are preparing food from a family recipe that has been handed down through the years.
- Involve your child in planning family celebrations, including holidays your family observes.
- Play music that is special to your family.
- Share family information with your child's teachers and the other children in the classroom. For example: family photos, family recipes and music.
- Visit your child's classroom. Get to know the other children.
- Participate in events that involve families of other children in your child's classroom. (For example: open house and the end of the year celebration.)

**If your child enjoyed the activity, consider this idea:**

- Involve your child in making a family tree, using photos. Include grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.





## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #21A

### "Creating a Classroom Community of Helpers"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Cognitive / Intellectual (Social Studies)

**Benchmark(s):** 3.30 Functions as member of classroom community

**Setting (when & where):** Classroom

**Number of Children:** All

---

**Materials:** poster board, glue-on picture hooks, permanent markers, index cards (3"x5" unlined), and yarn

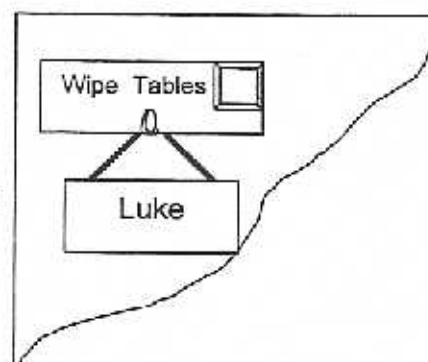
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**Steps:**

1. Decide with classroom co-workers and children some responsibilities children can assume in the classroom. For example: wipe tables, straighten books on bookshelf, and help with snack/lunch. The number and types of chores will depend on the number and abilities of the children in the classroom.
2. Make a Classroom Helper Chart. See directions below for one example.
3. Make name cards on index cards for each child. Laminate the cards.
4. Decide when and how helpers are to be selected and for what period of time. For example, helpers can be selected when the whole group comes together. Helpers can be selected daily or weekly.
5. Develop a fair system for selecting helpers. This is NOT a system of reward or punishment. Each child has an equal turn.
6. Explain to children that each will have a turn being a classroom helper.
7. Demonstrate how tasks are to be performed.
8. Send home a note telling families of tasks children are doing in the classroom.

**Directions for making helper chart:**

1. Prepare a poster board with several glue-on picture hanger hooks. Label each hook with a different classroom responsibility. Include a photo, picture or an illustration of the responsibility.
2. Using the laminated name cards, punch two holes and insert yarn to create a hanger.
3. Allow children to choose a responsibility for the week by hanging their name card on the hook.





## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #21B

### "We Can Solve Problems"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Cognitive / Intellectual (Social Studies)  
Social / Emotional (Interact Socially)

**Benchmark(s):** 3.30 Functions as member of the classroom community  
1.17 Stands up for rights  
1.18 Shares, respects the rights of others

**Setting (when & where):** Group time or Learning Center Time

**Number of Children:** Large group or small group

---

**Materials:** Collection of discussion pictures, children's books

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#### Steps:

1. Collect pictures of children in group settings. Look for pictures that show children in social interactions, both positive and negative.
2. Mount pictures on card stock and laminate.
3. Develop open-ended questions and attach to back of picture for handy reference. The questions should allow more than one answer and should encourage children to think and suggest solutions to problems that might be depicted in the photos, for example, show a picture of two children fighting over a toy. The questions might also focus on positive social interactions such as how children are working together or helping each other.
4. Help children relate what they see in the pictures to what they are experiencing in the classroom.

#### Ideas for Extending the Activity:

- Take photos of the children as they interact in the classroom. Enlarge them and use for discussion as outlined above.
- Develop a classroom photo album. Select photos that show children working and playing together in the classroom. For example, include photos of storytelling and singing and dancing in a group, cleaning up play areas together or creating a group mural.
- Invite children to describe what is happening in the photos and write down their response. Put the dictation with the appropriate photos.
- Books to read:

*Will I Have a Friend?* By Miriam Cohen. MacMillan. 1986.  
*Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes. HarperCollins. 1991.  
*Wimberly Worried* by Kevin Henkes. HarperCollins. 2000  
*The Quarreling Book* by Charlotte Zolotow. HarperCollins. 1963.

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #21C

#### "Rules for Our Classroom"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Cognitive / Intellectual (Social Studies)

**Benchmark(s):** 3.30 Functions as member of the classroom community  
3.31 Shows awareness of safe behavior

**Setting (when & where):** Group Time

**Number of Children:** All

---

**Materials:** Chart pad, markers, pictures of children working and playing together

---

**Steps:**

1. Gather children together in group time.
2. Use pictures of children working and playing together to introduce the idea of the classroom as a community.
3. State that we sometimes need rules to help us work and play together in a safe way. We need rules to help us cooperate.
4. Guide the children to come up with rules for behavior and the reason for the rules.
5. Children will usually state the rules negatively. For example, "We don't hit."
6. Help the children restate the rules positively. For example, "We use our hands to work and play together."
7. Write the rules on the chart pad and involve the children in reading them back with you.
8. Transfer the rules to a poster board or chart.
9. Add pictures or drawings to illustrate the rules.
10. Post the rules where the children can see them.
11. Review the rules with the children as necessary.

**Guidelines for rules:**

1. Have a limited number of rules (3-5).
2. State positively, telling the children what to do.
3. State clearly so there is only one interpretation.
4. Have a good reason for the rules, the safety of children or property, or respect for others.
5. Illustrate the rules with pictures or drawings.
6. Post the chart where children can see the rules.
7. Review the rules as needed.
8. Change the rules as needed.

Make a copy of the classroom rules and illustrations on 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper.

Make enough copies for each family.

Send home the rules with a note telling families how and why rules were developed.

## Activity #21

### THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

#### "Creating A Classroom Community"

Recall some of your favorite childhood memories. Your memories are probably of the times when you and your family did things together. A child's sense of belonging to a family is strengthened when families take time to do things together every chance they get. Children also need to feel a sense of belonging in their classroom. They need to feel they are an important member of a classroom community.

---

Here are some things we do in our classroom to help children feel a part of our classroom community.

- ☐ We sing songs and move to music together.
- ☐ We have story time together.
- ☐ We play, work and clean up play areas together.
- ☐ We take turns doing classroom chores.
- ☐ We establish "rules" or guidelines for our behavior.

This is what happens when children do things together with others in our classroom and with family members at home.

- Children take pride in belonging to both a family and to a classroom community.
- Children learn to work and play cooperatively with others.

## Activity #21

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### "Family Together Time"

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**You will need:** You, your child and other family members, a little bit of time

---

#### Try This!

- Plan family outings together; a trip to the library or to the park, for example.
- Involve your child in helping plan a menu for supper or a Saturday breakfast.
- Cook a batch of playdough and make holiday decorations together.
- Get buckets of soap and water and wash the windows or the family car.
- Plant bulbs outdoors.
- Rake leaves together.
- Involve your child in planning for a visit by family members.
- Pack a picnic together and take it to the backyard or to a neighborhood park.
- Take a get-well basket to a neighbor or friend who is ill.



**Activity #22****BENCHMARK ACTIVITY****"Safety Checklist"****Steps:**

1. Sit down with the director and preschool co-workers and develop a safety checklist for your preschool facility or program.
2. Consider dividing the checklist as follows:

**INDOOR SAFETY CHECKLIST**

Safety Conditions (Example)	Satisfactory or Not Applicable	Needs Attention
<b>Check Daily</b> 1. The daily schedule states the times each teacher will supervise areas and activities so children are monitored at all times.		
<b>Check Monthly</b> 24. Blocks and other wooden items are smooth and splinter free.		

**OUTDOOR SAFETY CHECKLIST**

Safety Conditions (Example)	Satisfactory or Not Applicable	Needs Attention
<b>Check Daily</b> 1. The area is securely fenced and gate latches are locked and may be opened only by adults.		
<b>Check Monthly</b> 13. Metal equipment is free of rust or chipped paint.		

Name of Person Completing Checklist	Date Completed	Time of Day
-------------------------------------	----------------	-------------

3. Develop a schedule for completing checklists. Schedule should include:  
Person Responsible      Date Completed      Time of Day

**Resources to consider when developing Safety Checklists:**

Minimum Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers  
Minimum Licensing Requirements for Family Child Care Homes  
Local Fire Department  
Cooperative Extension Service (safety pamphlets)

The following book has samples of checklists and excellent information on safety:

*Caring for Preschool Children, Volume 1. Module 1: Safe*  
Authors: Diane Trister Dodge, Derry Gosselin Koralek, Peter J. Pizzolongo.  
Publisher: Teaching Strategies, Washington, DC: 1996.

## Activity #22

### THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

#### "Safety First"

In our classroom, safety is a primary concern of everyone. The children are beginning to understand about safe and unsafe situations. They are gradually learning to protect themselves and look out for others.

---

**Here are some things we do to provide a safe environment for the children in our classroom.**

- ☐ We keep all the children in our view at all times.
- ☐ We keep the indoor and outdoor environment free of hazards.
- ☐ We have first-aid supplies in the classroom and on the playground and receive training in how to administer first-aid.
- ☐ We keep informed about safety standards for toys and equipment and share this information with families.
- ☐ We involve the children in establishing safety rules for indoor and outdoor play. We help them understand the reasons for the rules.
- ☐ We teach children safe use of materials and equipment.

**This is what happens when children are cared for in a safe environment.**

- Children learn to trust that the adults who care for them will keep them safe.
- Children learn what they can do to keep themselves and others safe.
- Children are developing safety habits that will be useful to them at home and in the school setting.

## Activity #22

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### "Think Family Safety"

---

#### Try This!

Here are a few items on safe practices when young children are around.  
Check the items you need to work on.

- ☐ Secure children in a car seat or seat belt in automobiles as required by law.
- ☐ Avoid toys with sharp points, small removable parts, a lead base paint or toys that can burn.
- ☐ Look out for worn electrical cords and replace them.
- ☐ Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove when cooking.
- ☐ Teach children to play in safe places, off streets and highways.
- ☐ Keep knives and sharp tools in holders and out of reach of children.
- ☐ Store bleaches, soaps, cleaners, matches, lighters and candles out of reach of children.
- ☐ Keep firearms and ammunition locked safely away from all children.
- ☐ Know and keep emergency phone numbers near the telephone: fire, police, poison control, and emergency medical technicians.
- ☐ Employ only dependable baby-sitters/caregivers.
- ☐ Store bathroom items such as soaps, shampoos, bath crystals, cosmetics, medicines, razors and razor blades and hair care equipment out of reach of children.
- ☐ Never leave a young child alone in the bathwater for any reason.
- ☐ Put a barrier around burning fireplaces and wood stoves to keep children from touching them and getting hurt.
- ☐ Never leave plastic bags lying around the house. Do not use plastic bags as mattress covers on the beds of infants or children.
- ☐ Check for children under or behind a car before backing out of the garage or driveway.
- ☐ Keep all medicines, insecticides, mothballs, lye, cleaning or painting materials, poisons and other similarly dangerous items out of the reach of children.





## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #23

### "Stop, Drop and Roll"

Developmental Learning Strand(s): Cognitive / Intellectual Learning (Social Studies)

Benchmark(s): 3.31 Shows awareness of safe behavior

Setting (when & where): Group Time

Number of Children: All

---

Materials: Song: "Stop, Drop and Roll"

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#### Steps:

1. Use this song to teach children fire safety.
2. Let children act out these three simple steps so they will become familiar with the procedure.
3. Discuss the need to **stop, drop and roll** whenever clothes catch fire. Running gives the fire even more oxygen to burn, while dropping and rolling smothers the flames so the air does not "feed" the fire.

#### Stop, Drop and Roll

*Tune: London Bridge*

What do you do if your shirt's on fire,  
shirt's on fire, shirt's on fire?  
What do you do if your shirt's on fire?  
You **Stop, Drop and Roll.**

What do you do if your pants are on fire,  
pants are on fire, pants are on fire?  
What do you do if your pants are on fire,  
You **Stop, Drop and Roll.**

What do you do if your robe's on fire,  
your robe's on fire, your robe's on fire?  
What do you do if your robe's on fire?  
You **Stop, Drop and Roll.**

\*This activity from *Beginnings: Success In Music and Movement*

#### Ideas for extending the activity

Add props to encourage children to engage in play related to safety. For example, adding a fire hat and a piece of hose to tricycle play invites children to role-play putting out a fire.

Contact your County Cooperative Extension Service for safety information. They may have home safety pamphlets that are available to you for sending home to families.

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #23

#### "Fire Safety in Our Classroom"

Fire is a serious hazard wherever it occurs. We realize that when your children are in our care, we must keep them safe from fire and other hazards. We also feel that we should teach your children ways they can help keep themselves safe from hazards such as fire, both at home and in our classroom.

---

Here are some things we do to protect your children and ourselves from safety hazards such as fire.

- ☐ We make sure safety equipment, such as smoke detectors and fire extinguishers, is operable and that we know how to use it.
- ☐ We post storm and fire drill procedures in each classroom.
- ☐ We practice fire and storm drills monthly.
- ☐ We introduce children to people in their community who help keep them safe; for example, firefighters and police officers.
- ☐ We teach children about safety practices through classroom activities such as **Stop, Drop, and Roll**.  
Children practice these three simple steps should their clothes catch on fire:
  1. **Stop**
  2. **Drop**
  3. **Roll**

---

This is what happens when children are involved in safety practices both at home and in the classroom.

- Children learn what they can do in hazardous situations to keep themselves and others safe.
- Children realize that there are people in their home, classroom and community who will help keep them safe.
- Children are learning fire safety habits that will be useful to them at home and in the school setting.

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #23

### "Protect Your Family from Fatal Home Fires"

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You will need: Smoke detectors and fire escape plan

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#### Try This!

#### Smoke Detectors

Install a smoke detector on every floor of your house.

- Place smoke detectors near the bedrooms.
- Test your smoke detectors at least once a month.
- Read and follow manufacturer's instructions on how and where to install smoke detectors, how to test them for sensitivity and how to maintain them in working order.

#### Fire Escape Routes

- Plan and practice at least two fire escape routes to the outside from every room in the house, especially bedrooms.
- Practice the escape routes by having fire drills in the home. Involve all family members in the drills.
- Designate a meeting place well away from the house where all members of the household meet. Check to be sure all family members are out of the house.
- Notify the fire department from a neighbor's telephone, not from inside your burning house.

#### Additional Ideas:

Develop emergency plans for tornadoes/storms.

Ask your child to show you what to do should clothes catch on fire.

There are 3 simple steps:

1. Stop
2. Drop
3. Roll



## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #24

### "Collecting Recyclable Materials"

Developmental Learning Strand(s): Cognitive / Intellectual Learning (Social Studies)

Benchmark(s): 3.32 Cares for the environment

Setting (when & where): Staff planning time

Number of Children: none

---

Materials: Classroom Connection and Family Connection Activity #24

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#### Steps:

1. Brainstorm with co-workers a list of recyclable materials to collect.
2. Brainstorm with co-workers potential uses for the materials.
3. Copy the attached **Classroom Connection and Family Connection Activity #24** to send home. (Adapt as noted below.)
4. Send each child home with a large paper grocery sack.
5. Include the letter asking parents to help children collect items that are on the list.

**Note:** Adapt the list in the **Family Connection Activity #24** to meet the needs of your program and your families or check those items you are requesting.

**Note:** Ask only for items that you will use and can store. Thank the families for the donations.

Involve children in sorting and storing like materials together. For example, place all the paper towel tubes in one bag. Label the containers.

#### After items are collected:

Place some of the items in different learning centers and observe how the children use the materials. For example:

Wrapping paper scraps, greeting cards, yarn, lace and ribbon scraps in the art center  
Mailer tubes in the block center

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #24

#### "Recycled Materials: Don't Throw Away That Paper Towel Tube"

Perhaps you've heard this saying: "One person's junk is another's treasure." In our classroom, both children and teachers treasure "junk." We use throwaway items in so many ways. We call this recycling.

---

Here are some things we do to make use of throwaway or recyclable materials in our classroom.

- ☐ We involve adults and children in collecting and saving items that would normally be thrown away.
- ☐ We sometimes ask families to save items for us. See **The Family Connection** for items we currently need.
- ☐ We make sure that all recycled materials are clean and safe to use.
- ☐ We provide recyclable materials for children to use in their activities; for example, paper in their art and writing experiences.
- ☐ We make teaching materials from the recycled items; for example, milk jug caps are used for markers when we play Bingo.

---

This is what happens when children are involved in collecting and using recycled materials in their daily experiences.

- Children have additional learning materials to use at no cost to anyone.
- Children are learning to take care of their environment as they use recycled materials. We call this **ecology**.
- Children are developing the habit of recycling that will carry over into their later life.
- Children are using their creativity and imagination as they experiment with recycled materials.

## Activity #24

### THE FAMILY CONNECTION

#### "Please Save Recycled Materials"

Dear Families,

We need your help in collecting items for our classroom. We are looking for items that you are planning to throw away. We call these recyclable items.

We ask that you place the items in the sack your child brought home from school.

Invite your child to tell you at a later date how we are using the items that you and other families donated.

We thank you for your contribution to our classroom. We will also understand if your family is already recycling the items for use in your home.

Thanks!

#### List of items needed for classroom activities

We have checked the items we need.

- ☐ Plastic butter tubs
- ☐ Film canisters
- ☐ Catalogs such as \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Large paper grocery sacks
- ☐ Fast food containers (clean)
- ☐ Plastic liter bottles (dried)
- ☐ Greeting cards (personal message half removed)
- ☐ Junk mail
- ☐ Yarn, lace and ribbon scraps
- ☐ Shoe boxes
- ☐ Paper towel tubes
- ☐ Empty cereal boxes (individual serving size)
- ☐ Mailer tubes
- ☐ Boxes of all sizes
- ☐ Paper products:
  - ☐ newspapers
  - ☐ computer paper
  - ☐ envelopes
  - ☐ file folders
  - ☐ wrapping paper
  - ☐ wallpaper samples
- ☐ Empty thread spools

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #25

### "Making Blocks from Recycled Materials"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Cognitive / Intellectual Learning (Social Studies)  
Physical (Fine Motor)

**Benchmark(s):** 3.32 Cares for the environment  
4.6 Coordinates eye and hand movement to complete tasks

**Setting (when & where):** Learning Center Time - Block Center

**Number of Children:** Small group, 4-6 children

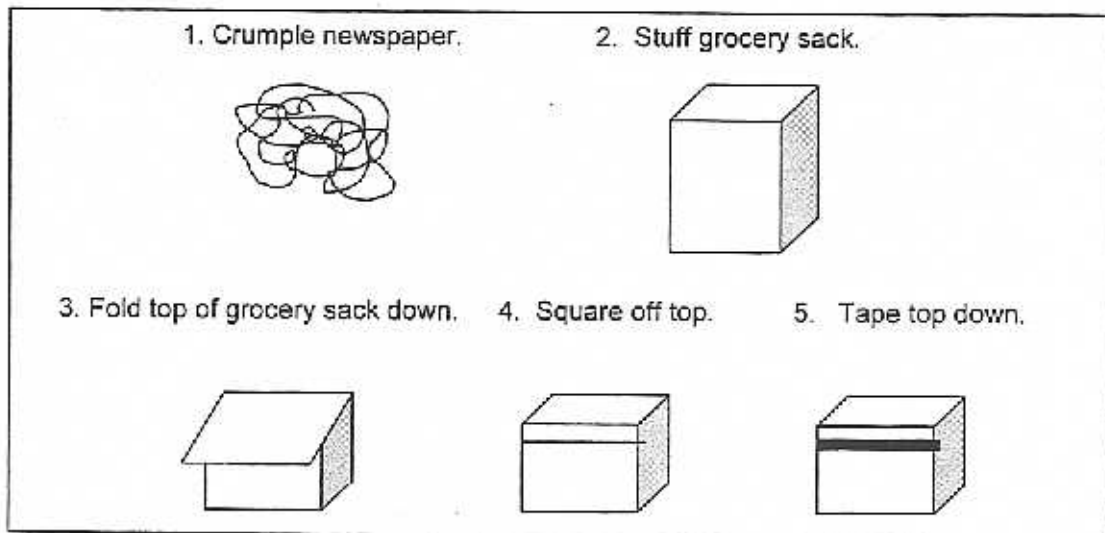
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**Materials:** Large paper grocery sacks  
Stack of old newspapers

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#### Steps:

1. Provide children with large paper grocery sacks and old newspapers.
2. Have children crumple newspaper, one sheet at a time.
3. Stuff grocery sack with crumpled newspaper (stuff firmly).
4. Fold top of grocery sack down.
5. Square off top.
6. Tape top down.
7. Add to block center.
8. Make an illustrated chart showing steps for making blocks:



#### Ideas for extending the activity

Involve children in stuffing large paper sacks with crumpled newspaper, leaving top so it can be tied. Tie the top together with green yarn. Let children paint the sacks orange and make giant pumpkins. Have a pumpkin patch for the fall!



Activity #25

THE FAMILY CONNECTION

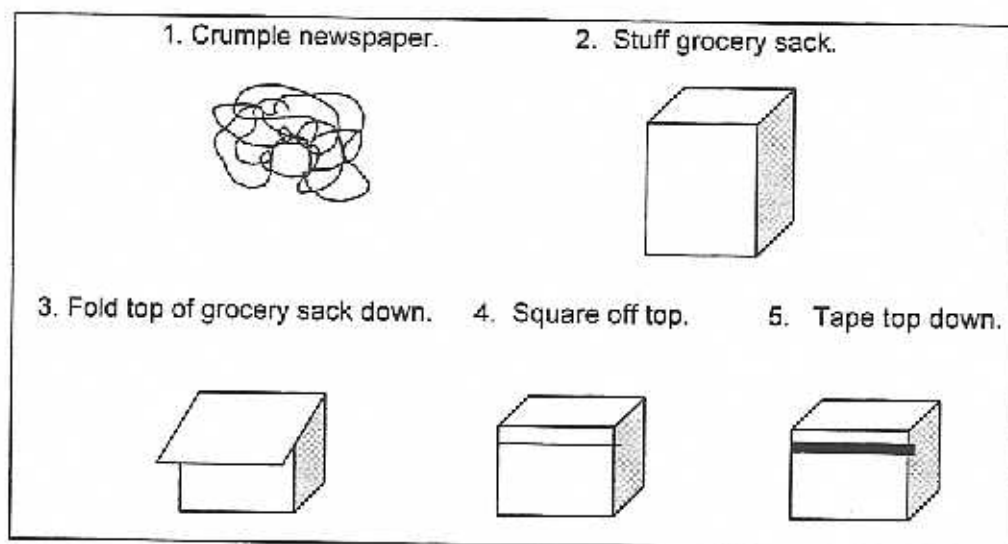


"Making Blocks from Recycled Materials"

You will need: large paper grocery sacks  
stack of old newspapers

Try This!

- Invite your child to help you make large blocks he/she can use in play. See the chart below.
- Give your child a large grocery sack and old newspapers.
- Have your child crumple newspaper, one sheet at a time, and fill the bag.
- Help your child fold the top of the grocery sack down and square it off.
- Help your child tape the top down.
- Suggest that your child make additional blocks or involve other family members in making blocks.



If your child enjoyed the activity, consider this idea:

Make sand toys from plastic bleach bottles.

**Clean out bleach bottles thoroughly. Make sure no bleach remains.**

- Cut the bleach bottle in half and use the bottom half to make a sand bucket.
- Use the top half, with cap screwed on, to make a sand scoop.
- Remove the cap from the bottom half to make a funnel.

**Make sure the edges are not sharp.**

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #26

### "Washing Hands"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Physical Development (Health & Nutrition)  
Social / Emotional (Act Independently)

**Benchmark(s):** 4.2 Demonstrates health and personal care habits  
1.2 Demonstrates independence in personal care

**Setting (when & where):** Group Time and Ongoing

**Number of Children:** All and individually as needed

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**Materials:** Hand washing chart

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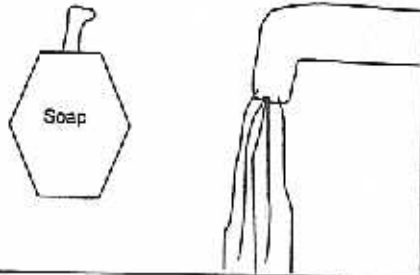
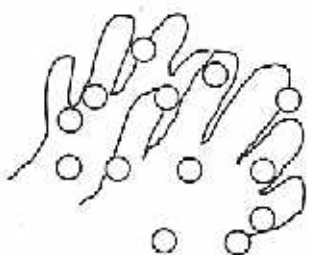
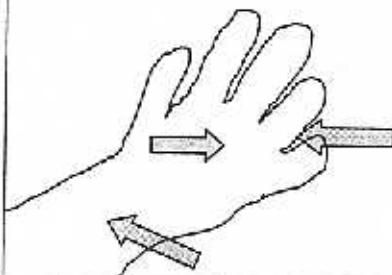


**Steps:**

1. Make a hand washing chart and laminate. See "Steps for Washing Hands" chart provided.

**Note:** Enlarge if possible and if you have space to hang a larger chart above the sink. Post a chart above the hand-washing sink where children can see it.

2. Introduce washing hands to children on the first day they come into your classroom.  
Times children should wash hands:  
Upon arrival in your classroom each day and before departing  
Before snack and meals  
After using the toilet  
After blowing nose  
After messy activities such as finger painting, using glue, or sand and water play  
After outdoor play
3. Model the following and describe the steps on the chart. Talk children through the steps as you observe them washing hands. Practice washing hands at group time without soap, water, and towels. Show the hand washing chart and review the steps with children.
4. Sing "This Is the Way We Wash Our Hands" (Tune: Mulberry Bush) and add verses to include steps. For example, "get the soap," "scrub them hard," "wipe them dry."
5. Sing "Wash Your Hands" (Tune: Row, Row, Row Your Boat)  
"Wash, wash, wash your hands  
Play our washing game.  
Rub and scrub, rub and scrub,  
Germs go down the drain.
6. Include "Steps for Washing Hands" chart with **The Family Connection**.

### Steps for Washing Hands

<b>1</b>		<b>Use liquid soap and running water</b>
<b>2</b>		<b>Rub hands together</b>
<b>3</b>		<b>Wash backs of hands, wrists and between fingers</b>
<b>4</b>		<b>Rinse well</b>
<b>5</b>		<b>Dry hands</b>

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #26

#### "Taking Care of Myself"

Children proudly show us their clean hands. They wash their hands all by themselves. They open their mouths wide so we can see their shiny clean teeth. They brush their teeth all by themselves. Children are learning to take care of themselves.

---

Here are some things we do to help children take care of their own health and personal care needs.

- ☐ We make "taking care of myself" an important part of our daily curriculum.
- ☐ We help children learn to take care of themselves. For example:
  - Wash and dry hands
  - Toilet procedures
  - Brush teeth (if provided by program)
  - Proper use and disposal of tissues used for blowing noses
  - Put on and take off own coats
  - Rest quietly
  - Eat healthy food
- ☐ We will learn words from the child's home language if necessary to help children take care of their health and personal care needs. For example, we will learn words for toileting.

---

This is what happens when children are allowed to take responsibility for keeping themselves healthy both at home and in the classroom.

- Children are learning to keep themselves healthy.
- Children are developing health practices that will last a lifetime.
- Children are becoming independent.

## Activity #26

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### "Washing Hands for Health"

---

#### Try this!

Help your child follow these steps to wash hands.

- ☐ Use liquid soap and running water
- ☐ Rub hands together
- ☐ Wash backs of hands, wrists, and between fingers
- ☐ Rinse well
- ☐ Dry hands

Sing this song with your child as he/she washes hands. Sing to the tune of "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush."

#### **This is the Way**

This is the way we wash our hands,  
Wash our hands, wash our hands.  
This is the way we wash our hands,  
So early in the morning.

Change the words to fit the situation. For example:

This is the way we wash our hands,  
Wash our hands, wash our hands.  
This is the way we wash our hands  
Before we eat our breakfast (or lunch, or dinner or supper)  
Or  
After we use the bathroom (or toilet, or potty, for example)

#### **Wash Your Hands**

Sing this song to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"

Wash, wash, wash your hands  
Play our washing game.  
Rub and scrub, rub and scrub,  
Germs go down the drain.

#### **Remind! Remind! Remind!**

Children need to be reminded often to wash their hands.

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #27

### "Food / Nutrition Experiences for Children"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Physical Development (Health & Nutrition)

**Benchmark(s):**

- 4.2 Demonstrates health and personal care habits
- 4.3 Tries new foods before deciding whether he/she likes them
- 4.4 Recognizes different types of food
- 4.5 Shows awareness that some foods are better for your body than others

**Setting (when & where):** Home Living or Cooking Center

**Number of Children:** Small group, 4-6 children

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**Materials:** Recipes for food experiences in which children can be actively involved

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**Steps:**

1. Collect recipes for food experiences in which children can be actively involved. Teacher demonstration is not the focus.
  - Criteria for recipes:
    - a. Contain only nutritious ingredients
    - b. Have a few simple steps children can follow and do most of preparation
    - c. Call for ingredients that are available in the kitchen of the facility, or easy to obtain locally
    - d. Combine a familiar ingredient with a less familiar one (for example, carrot sticks with broccoli when having a "vegetable tasting" experience)
    - e. Can be adapted so that each child can prepare an individual serving
    - f. Take into consideration the food allergies of the children and dietary restrictions of the families
    - g. Include regional, ethnic and cultural foods
2. Start with simple food experiences such as having children spread butter on bread or cream cheese on bagels.
3. Prepare illustrated recipe chart for each food experience.
  - a. Always include washing hands.
  - b. Emphasize health and safety practices.
4. Wash hands before beginning food preparation
5. Wash fruits and vegetables before preparing them.
6. Plan food experiences so that children can eat what they have prepared that day.
7. If possible send the recipe home to families.
8. Read books that go along with the food experience. For example:
  - Bread, Bread, Bread* by Ann Morris, photo illustrated by Ken Heyman, Lothrop, Lee and Shepard (1989)
  - The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Kraus, illustrated by Crockett Johnson, HarperCollins (1945)
  - Stone Soup* by Marcia Brown, Simon and Schuster (1947)

## Activity #27

### THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

#### "Cooking in Our Classroom"

Getting children to eat healthy foods is often a priority for families as well as for caregivers/teachers. We have found one way to encourage children to eat healthy food. We involve them in planning, preparing and serving of food. The children love to say they are "cooking."

---

Here are some ways we involve children in "cooking" experiences that stress good nutrition and are safe and educational.

- ☐ We include food experience as part of our curriculum.
- ☐ We plan recipes that have a few simple steps that are easy to follow. The children do most of the preparation.
- ☐ We use recipes that contain nutritious ingredients.
- ☐ We make recipe charts that have pictures and words. The children "read" the recipe as they prepare the food.
- ☐ We always wash hands before food preparation.
- ☐ We make sure that each child is involved in the food experience.
- ☐ We join the children in eating what they have prepared.
- ☐ We include cleaning up after food preparation.

---

This is what happens when children take part in preparing food at home and in the classroom.

- Children are learning about good nutrition.
- Children learn math skills as they measure ingredients.
- Children learn about science as they see ingredients change.
- Children are learning about reading and writing as they follow recipes.
- Children are learning to work together.



## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #27

#### "Your Child Can Be a Chef"

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**You will need:** The ingredients listed for the food item you select

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**Try this!**

- Involve your child in preparing one of the food items listed here. You know best which food item will be most appealing to your child. You also know which food item your child can best help prepare.
- Start with something that is easy. Later, try other items.
- Wash hands with your child before beginning any food preparation

**Spreading**

Let your child spread butter or jelly on bread or toast or spread cream cheese on bagels.

**Nutty Butter Apples**

Wash and dry apple thoroughly

Cut apple slices

Let your child spread crunchy peanut butter on the apple slices

**Flaky Butter Apples**

Wash and dry apple thoroughly

Cut apple slices

Help your child crush corn flakes between two sheets of wax paper  
(A rolling pin works best)

Let your child mix the crushed flakes with creamy peanut butter

Let your child spread mixture on apple slices

**Sandwich Wrap**

**You will need:**

- 1 flour tortilla (8 inch)
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise or salad dressing
- 1 lettuce leaf (washed and patted dry)
- 3 pieces of cheese singles
- 3 slices of smoked ham or turkey
- 1 pickle (dill or sweet)

**Let your child do the following:**

Wash and dry the lettuce leaf

Spread tortilla with mayonnaise or salad dressing

Add lettuce, cheese, ham/turkey and pickle

Help your child roll it up.

Eat as a sandwich or cut into bite sizes for snack.

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #28

### "Making Playdough with Children"

Developmental Learning Strand(s): Physical Development (Fine Motor)

Benchmark(s): 4.6 Coordinates eye and hand movement to complete tasks

Setting (when & where): Home Living or Science / Discovery Center

Number of Children: Small group, 4-6 children

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**Materials:** chart with the playdough recipe  
the ingredients for playdough: flour, salt, cooking oil, cream of tartar, water, food coloring (optional)  
saucepan, measuring cups and spoons, wax paper, plastic container that will seal

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**Note:** Playdough can be made as an activity with the children or by the adults in the program. Making playdough with the children must be a carefully supervised cooking experience.

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#### Steps:

##### Recipe for Playdough

2 cups flour  
1 cup salt  
4 teaspoons cream of tartar  
2 tablespoons cooking oil  
1 cup water  
food coloring (optional)

1. Combine dry ingredients in a saucepan.
2. Add cooking oil, water and food coloring.
3. Stir.
4. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently until mixture forms a soft ball.
5. Pour onto wax paper, allow to cool for 5-10 minutes.
6. Knead to finish mixing. **Caution:** Mixture will be *hot*.
7. When playdough cools store in airtight plastic container.
8. Allow the children the opportunity to play with the playdough during center time.

#### Ideas for extending the activity:

Provide cookie cutters, rolling pins, and plastic knives for the children to use with the playdough.

Make scented playdough by adding 2 packages of unsweetened powdered drink mix instead of food coloring.

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #28

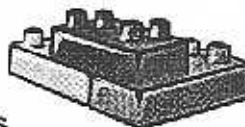
#### "Developing Muscles Needed for Writing"

Children must develop many skills before they are able to write. They need many opportunities to use their hands and fingers and eyes to do various things before they can successfully print letters. This is called fine motor development or developing small muscle skills.

Here are some things we do in our classroom to help children develop small muscle skills they will need for writing.

- ☐ We give children lots of materials that require them to use their hands, fingers and eyes. Here are some examples:

- Playdough to roll, pound and shape
- Beads to pick up and string
- Construction sets to put together and take apart
- Sets of items that link and interlock; large and small Legos<sup>R</sup> for example.



- Puzzles with and without knobs
- Pegs and pegboards
- Lacing cards and laces
- Pencils, crayons, washable markers and chalk



- Paint to use with fingers and large brushes
- Paper on which to scribble, draw and paint

- ☐ We give children opportunities each day to use the materials just listed.

This is what happens when children spend a lot of time experimenting with the materials provided in our classroom and at home.

- Children are developing control over their fingers, hands and eyes.
- Children are gaining the skills that will enable them to use writing tools such as pencils and markers.
- Children begin to print letters, usually those in their names.

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #28

#### "Making Playdough"

---

**You will need:** The ingredients for playdough: flour, salt, cooking oil, cream of tartar, water, food coloring (optional)  
saucepan, measuring cups and spoons, wax paper, plastic container that will seal

---

#### Try this!

##### Recipe for Playdough

2 cups flour  
1 cup salt  
4 teaspoons cream of tartar  
2 tablespoons cooking oil  
1 cup water  
food coloring (optional)

1. Combine ingredients in a saucepan.
2. Add cooking oil, water and food coloring.
3. Stir.
4. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently until mixture forms a soft ball.
5. Pour onto wax paper, allow to cool for 5-10 minutes.
6. Knead to finish mixing. **Caution:** Mixture will be *hot*.
7. When playdough cools store in an airtight plastic container.

**Note:** Playdough can be made as a carefully supervised cooking activity with your child. Playdough can also be made ahead of time for your child's enjoyment.

Provide opportunities for your child to use the playdough on an appropriate surface, such as wax paper, plastic placemat or laminated tabletop. Playdough can be used with hands, or you may want to add cookie cutters and a small rolling pin for your child to use.

#### **Additional Ideas for materials for small muscle development:**

Construction sets  
Toys that link and interlock  
Puzzles  
Large stringing beads or spools and shoe laces

## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #29

### "Successful Scissoring with a Cutting Box"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Physical Development (Fine Motor)

**Benchmark(s):** 4.6 Coordinates eye and hand movement to complete tasks

**Setting (when & where):** At table when children are in Learning Centers

**Number of Children:** One at a time

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**Materials:** basket or box, scissors, newspaper, scraps of construction paper and tissue paper, ends of wrapping paper, discarded stationery, junk mail, greeting cards

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**Steps:**

1. Place the scissors and materials in a basket or box.
2. Label the container "Cutting Box" and put a picture of a pair of scissors on the outside of the box.
3. Introduce the basket/box to the children.
4. Guide the children who need practice with scissors to become involved with cutting items in the box.
5. Discuss and decide on safety rules for using the scissors. For example:
  - Stay seated when using scissors.
  - Use scissors only to cut items in the box.
6. Show children how to use the scissors if necessary.
  - Have children practice opening and closing the scissors several times before trying to cut paper.
  - Show child how to hold the paper in one hand and the scissors in the other.
  - Guide child to open the scissors and slip the paper between the blades, close the blades, then open them.
  - Let child practice snipping small pieces of paper. Newspaper is easy to snip.

**Ideas for extending the activity:**

Add magazines and catalogs to the cutting box. Let child practice cutting pictures from magazines or catalogs as he/she becomes more proficient in using scissors.

Clean out cutting box as needed and re-stock.

Put some of the cut-up paper scraps in a collage box and place in the art center.



## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #29

#### "Successful Scissoring in Our Classroom"

Have you ever wondered why young children have difficulty using scissors? Managing scissors requires that a child can control and coordinate small muscles, especially hands, wrists and eyes. Children must have lots of experiences using scissors before they can be expected to cut accurately.

Most children are eager to cut with scissors. If a child is reluctant to use scissors, it may mean that he/she is not ready.

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Here are some things we do in our classroom to help children learn to use scissors.

- ☐ We allow children to practice tearing paper, usually newspaper, which prepares their fingers for cutting with scissors.
- ☐ We discuss safety rules for using scissors.
- ☐ We provide children with blunt-tip scissors.
- ☐ We show the children how to hold and manipulate the scissors. See **The Family Connection** for the steps.
- ☐ We have a basket or box filled with all kinds of paper: scraps of construction and tissue paper, ends of wrapping paper, left over laminate, discarded stationery and office memos.
- ☐ We allow the children to cut paper in the basket as they wish.
- ☐ We encourage children to cut pictures from magazines as they become more skilled in using scissors.

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This is what happens when children have lots of opportunities to use scissors.

- Children gain control and coordination of small muscles, especially hands, wrists and eyes.
- Children develop skills that will later enable them to cut along a straight and curved line.

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #29

#### "Successful Scissoring at Home"

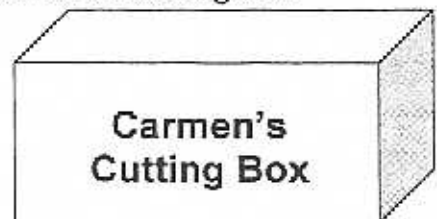
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**You will need:** Basket or box  
Blunt-tip Scissors  
Newspaper, scraps of construction and tissue paper, ends of wrapping paper, discarded stationery, junk mail, greeting cards

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#### Try this!

- Assist your child in collecting the items to store in the box.
- Discuss and decide on safety rules for using the scissors. For example:  
Stay seated when using scissors.  
Use scissors only to cut items in the cutting box.
- Show your child how to hold the scissors.
- Have your child practice opening and closing the scissors several times before trying to cut paper.
- Show your child how to hold the paper in one hand and the scissors in the other.
- Guide your child to open the scissors and slip the paper between the blades, close the blades, then open them.
- Let your child practice snipping small pieces of paper. Newspaper is easy to snip.
- Let your child practice cutting pictures from magazines or catalogs as he/she becomes more skilled in using scissors.





## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #30

#### "Indoor Gross Motor Activities: File and Prop Boxes"

Developmental Learning Strand(s): Physical Development (Gross Motor)

**Benchmark(s):** 4.9 Freely participates in gross motor activities  
4.10 Throws, kicks, bounces and catches  
4.11 Runs, jumps, hops and skips  
4.12 Shows balance and coordination

**Setting (when & where):** Classroom

**Number of Children:** All

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**Materials:** bean bags, hoops, balls, masking tape, boxes, small parachute or bed sheet, cassette tapes or CDs and players, storage containers

---

**Steps:**

1. Develop a file of gross motor activities that can safely be done indoors. See **The Family Connection** Activity #30 for ideas to add to your activity file.
2. Include activities and materials for the following three categories of motor skills:
  - a. Locomotion: walk, gallop, leap, jump, hop, slide, crawl, slither, creep, tiptoe (running in place can be included)
  - b. Stability: turn, spin, twist, stretch, curl, freeze, wiggle, sway, shake, roll
  - c. Manipulative: throw and catch (can be bean bags or balls if safe to use indoors)
3. Collect gross motor activities and materials from a variety of sources:
  - a. Resource books
  - b. Workshops
  - c. Early childhood magazines
  - d. Co-workers
  - e. School supply catalogs or stores (tapes and CDs)
4. Store gross motor props in labeled containers such as boxes or baskets.
5. Include gross motor activities in your classroom daily.
6. Participate with the children.
7. Include the activities on your weekly plan sheet.

**Note:** It may be necessary to move furniture in your classroom in order to have room for gross motor activities. Safely first!

**Resources:** *The Instant Curriculum* by Pam Schiller & Joan Rossano, Gryphon House (1990)  
*Parachute Play – Revised* by Liz and Dick Wilmes, Building Blocks (2000)



## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #30

#### "On the Move"

Think about newborn infants. They are so helpless and have little control over their bodies. Fast forward to the same children at the age of three or four. These preschool children are always on the move. They run, they jump, they hop, and they climb. These children are developing their large muscles. This is sometimes referred to as developing gross motor skills.

---

**Here are some things we do in our classroom and on our playground to help children develop their large muscles.**

- ☐ We give children daily opportunities to develop their large muscles.
- ☐ We plan indoor activities such as marching, exercising, moving like animals, moving to music and balancing.
- ☐ We include time in our daily schedule for outdoor play.
- ☐ We provide materials such as balls and bean bags to toss and balls to catch and to bounce.
- ☐ We provide trikes for children to steer and pedal.

**This is what happens when children have daily opportunities to use their large muscles.**

- Children become more physically fit which is important to their health.
- Children learn better when they are healthy and in good physical condition.
- Children feel good about learning to control their body movements (increases self-esteem).
- Children are building a foundation for more advanced physical skills such as skipping, jumping rope, hitting a ball, and throwing a ball with accuracy.

### Activity #30

**You will need:** socks      masking tape      hoops (hula hoops)  
basket      dried beans      chalk

### Toss the Bean Socks Game



- ## Balancing a Basket

- ### Balancing on Tape

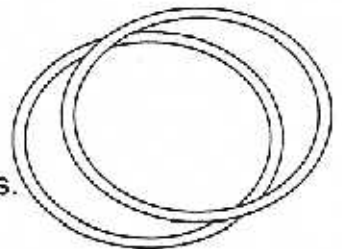
- Put a strip of masking tape on floor (6 feet long)
- Invite your child to walk on the tape.
- Notice how she/he uses arms for balancing

- Create an obstacle course in an area of a room with space for moving.
- Include a taped line to walk on, a table to crawl under, chairs or hoops to crawl around, a book to jump over and a large box to crawl through.

- Use chalk to draw a hopscotch pattern on your patio or driveway (if safe).
- Show your child how to hop the pattern: one foot, two feet, one foot, two feet, one foot.
- Let your child hop according to her/his ability to do so.

It will take a lot of practice for a child to be able to hop the pattern. This activity is probably best suited for four year old children. Let your child practice hopping. Using stones and markers to play the game is a skill for older children.

- Buy hoops (hula hoops) at the discount or dollar store.
- Let your child create his/her own ways to play with the hoops.



## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #31

#### "Collection of Language / Discussion Pictures"

Developmental Learning Strand(s): Language

**Benchmark(s):**

- 5.2 Expands vocabulary
- 5.3 Recognizes and identifies by name most common objects and pictures
- 5.5 Uses words to communicate ideas and feelings
- 5.8 Uses language to problem solve

**Setting (when & where):** Group Time and Learning Center Time

**Number of Children:** Large group, small group or individually

---

**Materials:** File of pictures

---

**Steps:**

1. Develop a file of pictures to be used for language development.  
Resources for pictures: magazines, catalogs, purchased picture sets
2. Criteria for pictures:
  - a. Pictures should be photos of real people and objects (not cartoons)
  - b. Pictures reflect diversity in a positive way
3. Include two primary types of pictures:
  - a. Pictures for naming and discussion; for example pictures of objects, people and animals
    - *Fruit:* apple, orange, banana
    - *People:* boy, girl, baby, man, woman
    - *Animals:* dog, cat, pig
    - *Objects:* hammer, nail, saw
    - *Furniture:* chair, bed, table

These pictures can be used with:

- Children learning English as a second language
- Children with limited vocabulary
- Children so they can describe how items are used. For example, trees are for climbing, chopping down for wood. Cars are for driving, for riding in, for going to the store

Children may expand on what they see in the pictures and relate it to personal experiences. For example, "We went in our car to my aunt's house."

**Note:** Make sure children have hands-on experiences with the real objects they see in pictures.

- b. Pictures that show people interacting, that show action, that show situations. These pictures stimulate discussion, encourage creative thinking, allow children to express their ideas and encourage problem-solving.  
Steps for picture discussion:
  - Show a picture.
  - Invite children to "picture read" the situation, tell what is happening in the picture.
  - Ask open-ended questions; questions that have no right or wrong answer and invite children to respond.

### Benchmark Activity #31 cont. "Collection of Language / Discussion Pictures"

Example: Show a picture of a group of people riding in a car.

- Begin by asking: "Tell me what you see in this picture" to get verbal response.
- Ask: "Who do you think these people are?" and "Where do you suppose they are going?" Many responses can be made and any response is correct.

Develop a system for filing pictures:

- File by categories: people, animals, plants, food, tools, transportation.
- File by themes of study.

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #31

#### "Expanding Language"

Can you remember how excited you were when your child said his/her first word? Now, do you sometimes think that this same child talks all the time. Your child has gone from saying that special first word to saying hundreds of words and speaking in complete sentences. Your child has developed language.

---

**Here are some things we do in our classroom to help children use and expand language.**

- ☐ We take time to listen and talk with individual children.
- ☐ We give children real objects such as seashells and pinecones to explore and talk about.
- ☐ We use pictures as a way to help children learn new words.
- ☐ We use songs, fingerplays, rhyming activities, puppets and games to encourage children to use and expand language.
- ☐ We set up our classroom in learning centers and add props to the centers that encourage children to talk with each other. For example, we add dolls, dress-up clothes and telephones to the home living center and cars, trucks and animals to the block center.
- ☐ We encourage children to talk about their feelings.

**This is what happens when children have many opportunities to use language to communicate with others.**

- Children gain conversational skills that will be useful to them throughout their lives.
- Children gain confidence in their ability to communicate with others.
- Children use words to express their ideas, feelings and needs.
- Children expand their vocabulary as they learn and use new words.

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #31

#### "Naming Things"

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**You will need:** Catalogs with items of interest to children. Christmas or gift catalogs are often a favorite.

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#### Try this!

- Add a couple of catalogs to your child's collection of picture books.
- Observe your child to see if he/she shows an interest in the catalogs.
- Sit down with your child and look at one of the catalogs together.
- Invite your child to name the items on the page.
- Tell your child the name of an item if he/she does not know it or if he/she tells you how the item is used. For example, if your child says, "You open cans with it", reply "Yes, you do open cans with it. It is called a can opener."
- Give your child clues about certain items on the page and ask him/her to point to and name the item. For example, say "We pack clothes in it when we're going on a trip" (suitcase) or "We turn it on when nighttime comes." (lamp).
- Suggest that your child select a favorite item such as one of the toys on a page and tell you why it is a favorite.
- Invite your child to tell you how items in the catalog are used; for example, items such as cars, lawnmowers and tables. Accept what your child says even though the explanation may be unusual.

**Note:** Do these suggested activities at different times. Continue the activity only as long as your child is interested.





## BENCHMARK ACTIVITY

### Activity #32

#### "Collection / File of Language Materials"

**Developmental Learning Strand(s):** Language

**Benchmark(s):** 5.2 Expands vocabulary  
5.4 Participates in songs, fingerplays, rhyming activities and games  
5.9 Follows directions in sequence

**Setting (when & where):** Classroom and outdoors

**Number of Children:** Large group or small group

---

**Materials:** Resource books, early childhood magazines, notebook, computer file or file cards and file box

---

**Steps:**

1. Compile a collection of language materials. Include:
  - a. Fingerplays
  - b. Songs
  - c. Poetry
  - d. Games
2. Collect language materials from a variety of sources to include:
  - a. Resource books
  - b. Workshops
  - c. Early childhood magazines
  - d. Co-workers
  - e. Your own creative fingerplays
  - f. Familiar songs and fingerplays adapted to fit your children and curriculum
  - g. Internet websites
3. Develop a system for filing and storing the language materials. For example:
  - a. In a notebook
  - b. In a computer file
  - c. On index cards to place in a file box
4. Include the language materials on your weekly plan sheet.

**Ideas for extending the activity**

- Include words to songs and words and directions for fingerplays in your parent newsletter.
- Make illustrated fingerplay, song and poetry charts. Laminate and show to children as they say the fingerplay or poem. Place these charts in the library area for children to use independently.

**Note:** Discussion Pictures are addressed in **Benchmark Activity #21B**, "We Can Solve Problems" and **Benchmark Activity #31**, "Collection of Language/ Discussion Pictures."

## THE CLASSROOM CONNECTION

### Activity #32

#### "Fingerplays: A Fun Way to Learn"

Children in our classroom often say fingerplays at group time. You may hear them saying fingerplays as they play independently. They may say a fingerplay at home.

Fingerplays are rhymes and movements for the hands and fingers. Some fingerplays which date back almost 2000 years are still used in early childhood classrooms. Fingerplays are a fun way for children to learn.

---

Here are some things we do to make sure fingerplays are included in our daily classroom experiences.

- ☐ We know and use a variety of fingerplays and learn new ones.
- ☐ We include fingerplays that relate to our themes of study.
- ☐ We use fingerplays as a way to move children from one activity to another. We call this a "transition."
- ☐ We use fingerplays to help children calm down after they have been very active.
- ☐ We use fingerplays as a way to get children's attention as we prepare to read them a story.

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This is what happens when children learn and say fingerplays.

- Children learn the names of body parts, numbers and shapes.
- Children learn to control their fingers.
- Children learn new words.
- Children are able to follow directions.
- Children develop listening skills.
- Children can repeat things in order.

## THE FAMILY CONNECTION

### Activity #32

### "A Fun Way to Learn At Home"

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**You will need:** Fingerplays listed here or others you know

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#### Try this!

- Select one of the fingerplays included here.
- Involve your child in saying the fingerplay and making the finger motions that go with it.
- Try one of the others at another time.
- Ask your child's teacher for additional fingerplays if you and your child enjoyed these.
- Share with us fingerplays that you remember from your childhood.

#### The Bee Hive

Here is the bee hive  
Where are the bees?  
Hiding away where nobody sees.  
(thumb and fingers bent into palm of fist)  
See them come creeping  
Out of their hive-  
One, two, three, four, five  
(one finger out on each count)

#### Grandma's Glasses

Here are grandma's glasses,  
(make "glasses" over eyes with fingers)  
Here is grandma's cap  
(fold hands over head)  
And this is the way she folds her hands  
(fold hands)  
And puts them in her lap.  
(place hands in lap.)

#### Funny Bunny

Here is a bunny with ears so funny,  
(hold fingers to make bunny ears)  
And this is his hole in the ground.  
(shape fingers like a hole in the ground)  
When a noise he hears, he pricks up his ears,  
And jumps in his hole in the ground.  
(use appropriate motions of rabbit jumping into hole)

#### Two Little Blackbirds

Two little blackbirds sitting on a hill,  
(hold up forefingers of each hand)  
One named Jack.  
(hold one forefinger out)  
One named Jill.  
(hold the other forefinger out)  
Fly away, Jack. Fly away, Jill.  
(make one hand and then the other "fly away" behind your back)  
Come back, Jack. Come back, Jill.  
(bring hands back to front)

## **Supplement 1:**

### **Children Learning English as a Second Language**

More and more preschool programs are enrolling children who are learning English as a second language. The following are a few suggestions to consider in working with these children and their families.

1. Get to know the child's family. Learn the names of all family members.
2. If necessary, recruit bilingual members in your program or community to serve as liaisons with families who don't speak English.
3. Encourage families whose first language is not English to continue to speak their language at home.
4. Model language usage by using gestures with words and objects as much as possible.
5. Learn and use key words and phrases in the child's home language; words for greetings and good-byes, for food, toileting, clothing and family members, for example.
6. Integrate key words and phrases of the child's home language into daily and group-time routines such as greeting, singing, counting, story time and transitions.
7. Include songs from the child's home language.
8. Purchase children's books in both English and Spanish (if Spanish is the child's home language).
9. Get someone to record children's stories in the child's home language and place the recordings and the books in the Listening Center.
10. Provide language materials such as discussion pictures and puppets that reflect language and culture of the children.
11. Include dramatic-play props that represent diversity. For example, a selection of real cooking and eating utensils from children's homes and different cultures; empty food boxes from children's homes with print in their home language.
12. Encourage all children to play together in learning centers so that children who speak a language other than English play with English-speaking children. Non-English speaking children are motivated to communicate without the help of a teacher. Both groups will learn language from each other.
13. Invite the child to teach you key words in his/her home language. Learn how to say "hello" and the words for colors, numbers and names of animals for example.
14. Seek training in the area of diversity, including language.

## Supplement 2:

### Children With Special Needs

Inclusion, which is the integration of children with disabilities into the classroom, sometimes brings young children with special needs into preschool programs. For children with special needs, typical experiences such as those contained in **The Family Connection** packet may need to be modified.

The developers of **The Family Connection** materials feel that any adaptations or modifications of the activities for children with special needs can best be addressed in individual programs. There are resources available for preschool programs serving children with special needs in their classrooms. Persons who have been trained to work with children with disabilities include Early Childhood Special Education Teachers, Speech Pathologists, Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists. It is recommended that preschool administrators and caregivers/teachers consult with these professions for guidance in making any modifications to the activities in **The Family Connection** pack. Caregivers/teachers are also encouraged to seek out training opportunities that address inclusion.

Suggested resources for preschool programs wishing to learn more about inclusion:

Chandler, P.A. (1994). *A place for me: including children with special needs in early care and education settings*. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Gould, P. & Sullivan, J. (1999). *The inclusive early childhood classroom: easy ways to adapt learning centers for all children*. Beltsville, Md: Gryphon House

Odom, S.L., ed. *Widening the circle: Including children with disabilities in preschool programs*. Teacher College Press

Worley, M. & Wilbers, J. (Editors) (1994). *Including children with special needs in early childhood programs*. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Professional Journals such as:

*Young Children*, published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.  
*Dimensions of Early Childhood*, published by the Southern Early Childhood Association.

### **Supplement 3:**

#### **Portfolios**

Portfolio – a selected, usually chronological collection of a child's work that may be used to evaluate the development and learning process.

##### **Tips for Organizing and Maintaining Portfolios**

1. Organize the portfolio by developmental learning strands:
  - a. Social / Emotional
  - b. Creative / Aesthetic
  - c. Cognitive / Intellectual
  - d. Physical
  - e. Language
2. Decide on a system for storage of collected work
  - a. Folders
  - b. Boxes
  - c. Accordion files
3. Decide how often to include samples of children's work in the portfolio
4. Develop a list of the types of samples to include for each developmental learning strand
5. Include the child's name, the date, and other needed information on the back of each item
6. Share portfolios with families during conferences
  - a. Review the child's portfolio before the family conference
    - i. Note areas of growth to share with the parents
    - ii. Look for positive aspects of the child's work
    - iii. Have suggestions of what parents can do at home in areas that warrant special attention
  - b. Prepare the environment so there is comfortable space for parents to look at the portfolio
  - c. Sit beside the parents as the portfolio is reviewed
  - d. Allow the parents time to look at the portfolios on their own
  - e. Respond to their questions and comment

## **Items in the Portfolio**

### **Work Samples / Artwork**

- Original drawings and paintings with captions
- Three-dimensional creations (may be necessary to photograph)
- Writings
- Dictations

### **Photographs**

- Child participating in self-help skills
- Child participating in a solitary activity
- Child playing in a learning center
- Child participating in group activities
- Three-dimensional creations that cannot be stored in portfolio
- Structures such as block building

**Note:** Include written notes/descriptions of what was happening in the photo. Note when and where the event occurred.

### **Written Records**

- Anecdotal Records
- Interview with children
- Notes from parent conferences
- Interview with parents
- Narrative / Summary Reports

### **Audio and Video Recordings**

- Child retelling a story or telling a made-up story
- Saying words in a foreign language
- Singing a song
- Child participating in a group activity

### **Charts / Listings / Checklists of a Child's Activities**

- Child's favorite rhymes, fingerplays, poems and chants
- Books child enjoys
- Self-help and personal care skills and behaviors demonstrated
- Learning centers child selects
- Child's favorite friends

### **Developmental Rating Scales and Checklists**

- Documentation of an individual child's development over time
- Basis for planning curriculum for individual and groups of children

Taken from: The Arkansas Early Childhood Framework: An Approach to Curriculum Development for 3 and 4 Year Old Children Training Manual



## Resources

**Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework: An Approach to Curriculum Development for 3 and 4 Year Old Children Training Manual.** (1999)

**Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework: Benchmarks with Strategies and Activities for Three and Four Year Old Children** (1999)

**Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework Developmental Rating Scale for Three and Four Year Old Children.** (1999)

Diffy, D. & Morrison, K. (eds) (1996). *Family-friendly communication for early childhood programs.* Washington, D. C.: Naeyc.

Dodge, D.T., Colker, L. & Heroman, C. (2002). *The creative curriculum for preschool, fourth edition.* Washington, D.C.: Teaching Strategies, Inc.

Dodge, D. T., Koralek, D. G. & Pizzolonga, P. J. (1996). *Caring for preschool children, Volume 1* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Washington, D. C.: Teaching Strategies, Inc.

Gould, P. & Sullivan, J. (1999). *The inclusive early childhood classroom: easy ways to adapt learning centers for all children.* Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House

Larson, N., Henthorne, M. & Plum, B. (1994). *Transition magician: strategies for guiding young children in early childhood programs.* St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press

Schiller, P. & Rossano, J. (1990). *The instant curriculum.* Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House